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ANNALS

OF THE

PENINSULAR CAMPAIGNS.

CHAPTER I.

CAMPAIGN OF SIR JOHN MOORE.

1808. October.

On the liberation of Portugal, by the Convention of Cintra, it was determined by the British government to despatch an expedition to the north of Spain. Preparations for this purpose were immediately set on foot by Sir Hew Dalrymple, and continued by Sir Harry Burrard, without any considerable progress being made in the equipment of the army for active service.

It was not till the sixth of October that Sir

CHAP. I. 1808. October. John Moore received official information of his being appointed to command the troops destined for this service. The despatch stated, that the officer commanding the forces of his Majesty in Portugal, was directed to detach a corps of twenty thousand infantry, with two regiments of German light cavalry, and a suitable body of artillery, to be placed under his orders, and that this force would be joined by a corps of above ten thousand men, then assembling at Falmouth, under command of Sir David Baird.

Sir John Moore was directed to proceed, with the troops under his more immediate command, without any avoidable delay; and was instructed to fix on some place of rendezvous for the whole army, either in Gallicia or on the borders of Leon. The specific plan of operations to be subsequently adopted, he was to concert with the commanders of the Spanish armies.

Sir John Moore had no sooner assumed the command, than he found he had considerable difficulties to overcome. Few effective preparations had been made for the equipment of the troops by his predecessors in command. Magazines were to be formed, and

means of transport to be provided, in an impoverished and exhausted country. The approach of the rainy season rendered it, above all things, desirable, that the army should, as soon as possible, set forward on its march; yet all the complicated preliminaries, necessary for this purpose, were still to be accomplished. These formidable difficulties were overcome by the energy of Sir John Moore; and, in less than a fortnight from the period of his assuming the command, the greater part of the army was on its march to the frontier.

It formed part of the instructions of Government, that the cavalry should proceed by land; but a discretionary power was vested in the commander, to move the infantry by sea or land, as he might judge most advisable. Sir John Moore preferred the latter, because, at that season of the year, a coasting voyage was uncertain and precarious, and because he was informed that, at Corunna, there were scarcely means of equipment for the force under Sir David Baird, already destined for that port.

Considerable difficulties occurred in ascertaining the state of the roads; and, deceived by er-

CHAP. I. roneous information on that point, Sir John Moore determined on dividing his army, a dangerous arrangement, and one by which the period of concentration would of necessity be retarded. In consequence of this decision, the troops were ordered to march in three columns.

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A corps of six thousand men, composed of the cavalry, four brigades of artillery, and four regiments of infantry, under command of Lieutenant-General Hope, were directed to pass through the Alentejo, and proceed by the route of Badajos, Merida, Truxillo, Talavera de la Reyna, and the Escurial.

Three brigades, under Lieutenant-General Fraser, marched by Abrantes and Almeida.

Two brigades, commanded by Major-General Beresford, were sent by Coimbra and Almeida. As it was deemed imprudent, by Sir John Moore, that the two latter columns should be without artillery, a brigade of light six-pounders was likewise directed on Almeida.

The different corps of the army having commenced their march, Sir John Moore quitted Lisbon on the twenty-seventh of October. On
Nov. 8. the eighth of November he was at Almeida.

On the thirteenth he arrived at Salamanca, where he received intelligence of the defeat and dispersion of Belvidere's army before Burgos. This event seems to have inspired the British general with melancholy forebodings of the fate of the contest in which he was about to engage. On the second night after his arrival, he was awakened by an express from General Pignatelli, conveying intelligence that the enemy had pushed on a body of cavalry to Valladolid, a city not above three marches from Salamanca.

The situation of Sir John Moore had thus suddenly become one of extreme peril. The enemy were in his front; and he had in Salamanca only three brigades of infantry, and not a single gun. In these circumstances, he contemplated again retiring on Portugal. He assembled the Junta of Salamanca; and laying before them the information he had received, stated, that, should the enemy continue their advance on his front—now wholly uncovered—the British army had no option but retreat. On the arrival of intelligence, however, that the French troops had been withdrawn to Palencia, he determined on continuing his head-quarters at Salamanca; and directed Generals Baird

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and Hope to close on that city with their divisions.

Every day brought with it intelligence of fresh disasters. By the battle of Espinosa, Blake's army had been dispersed. The whole left wing of the Spanish army, which occupied a line reaching from Bilboa to Burgos, had thus been annihilated; and the flank of the centre, under Castanos, was laid open to the enemy.

The situation of Sir John Moore at Salamanca, with respect to the Spanish armies, was very extraordinary. He was at the vertex of a triangle, the base of which, at the distance of between two hundred and fifty, and three hundred miles, was the French position,—the points at the extremities of the base, that is the French flanks, were the positions of the Spanish armies.

The army of Castanos was, at this period, posted in the neighbourhood of Tudela, but on the opposite or north side of the Ebro, and about three hundred miles to the north-east of Salamanca. The French were thus completely interposed between the Spanish and British armies; and might, at any moment, advance on the latter in overwhelming force. For this state of things, Sir John Moore was unpre-

pared. All his arrangements had been framed on the assurance that the assembling of his forces would be protected by the Spanish armies. To effect the union of his isolated divisions had now become an operation of danger and difficulty. The position of these bodies was such as to prevent the possibility of immediate action. He was placed as a central point between the two wings of his army, and found it impracticable to approach the one, without hazarding the safety of the other.

Thus compelled to remain inactive at Salamanca, Sir John Moore endeavoured to stimulate the local authorities into the adoption of such measures of promptitude and vigour as were suited to the exigence of the crisis. In this effort he failed. The Spanish people, though still influenced by fierce and unmitigated hatred towards their invaders, were no longer animated by that uncalculating and convulsive energy which in the commencement of the struggle, had goaded them like madness into furious resistance. The fierceness of the paroxysm had passed; and though, in the cause of their country, the hand of every Spaniard was prepared to gripe the sword, the blows it dealt

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were directed with an erring aim, and by a feebler arm. Their detestation of a foreign yoke was undiminished; but it had become a fixed and inert sentiment, rather than a fierce, uncontrollable, and all-pervading impulse.

Before entering Spain, every thing had contributed to conceal the real state of the Peninsula from the penetrating vision of Sir John Moore. The British government, itself deceived, had become, in its turn, the involuntary propagator of deception. At the commencement of the struggle, it had despatched military agents to the head-quarters of the different Spanish generals, to act as organs of communication, and transmit authentic intelligence of the progress of events in the seat of war. The persons selected for this service were, generally, officers undistinguished by talent or experience, and therefore little suited to discharge, with benefit, the duties of an office so delicate and important. They seem generally to have become the dupes of the unwarranted confidence and inflated boasting of those by whom they were surrounded; and their reports were framed in a strain of blind and sanguine anticipation, not deducible from any enlarged or rational view of the prospects

or condition of the people. Instead of true representations of the numbers, character, and state of efficiency of the armies, they were deluded into adopting the extravagant hyperboles of rash and vain-glorious men, and contributed what in them lay to propagate false and exaggerated notions of the military power of the Spanish nation. They did not venture to obtrude on the British Cabinet the unpalatable truth that the national army was, in effect, nothing more than a congregation of separate and independent bands, miserably armed, possessing but a scanty and ill-served artillery, and almost destitute of cavalry. Had they done so; and had they stated likewise, that this army was without magazines of any kind, without generals of talent or experience, without officers sufficiently versed in the details of war, to instruct and discipline the raw levies which constituted the greater part of its numerical strength; and, further, that the different leaders were prevented, by frivolous jealousies, and discordance of opinion, from cordially uniting in the execution of any great operation, the calamitous events on the Ebro would probably not have come like a thunderbolt to crush and stultify the combinations of a government, which was

CHAP. I. at least sincerely anxious to co-operate in the cause of freedom.

1808. November. England had furnished Spain with supplies; she had poured arms and munitions into the country with a profuse hand; but she had taken no efficacious measures for their judicious application. She exercised little influence on the counsels of the Spanish government; and even while providing the very thews and sinews of the war, her voice was seldom listened to with obedience or respect. Arms, placed at the disposal of men swayed by petty views and local interests, were wasted and misapplied; and the supplies of money, clothing, and ammunition, so liberally afforded, became a bone of contention and of petty jealousy to the rival authorities. In truth, the provincial governors were actuated by no liberal and enlarged views of the public benefit. Supine in danger, and vain-glorious in prosperity, at once untalented and unenlightened, no men could be more unfitted to direct the resources of a nation with vigour and effect.

In such men Sir John Moore could place no trust. His expectations had been deceived. He found supineness where he expected energy; a people not filled with an active spirit-stirring

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enthusiasm, but reposing in a dull, immovable, and lethargic confidence in their own prowess and resources, even in the immediate neighbourhood of a triumphant enemy. His mind became not only perplexed but irritated by the disappointment of his hopes. At Salamanca he knew himself to be placed in a difficult and precarious position, unprotected in front, separated from the wings of his army, with nothing but a barren country to retire upon. To the concentration of his forces, he was aware, indeed, that no present obstacle existed; but how long such a state of things might continue, he had no data on which to form a judgment. The enemy at any moment might interpose a body which would prevent the possibility of a junction, for there existed no Spanish force from which he could anticipate protection.

To the other embarrassments of Sir John Moore must be added, the difficulty of receiving true and faithful intelligence of the events passing around him. On public and official reports no confidence could be placed, and of more authentic sources of intelligence he was in a great measure deprived. He had been sent forward without a plan of operations, or any data on which to

CHAP. I. found one. Castanos was the person with whom he had been directed to concert his measures; but that officer had been superseded by Romana; and of the situation of the latter, Sir John Moore only knew that he was engaged in rallying the remains of Blake's army, at a distance of about two hundred miles. Naturally distrustful of the apocryphal intelligence transmitted by the British military residents, he could rely only on the reports of Colonel Graham and Captain Whittingham; and these, in conjunction with the information which his own officers were enabled to procure, contributed still further to deepen the gloom by which his mind was overcast.

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It was in such circumstances, and under the influence of such feelings, that Sir John Moore wrote to Mr. Frere, the new minister at Madrid, whose opinions he had been instructed to receive with deference and attention, proposing as a question what course he should pursue, in case the army of Castanos, which yet shewed front to the enemy, should be defeated. Should that event occur, "I must," said Sir John Moore, in a letter dated twenty-seventh November, "either march upon Madrid, and throw myself into the heart of

Nov. 27.

Spain, and thus run all risks, and share the fortunes of the Spanish nation; or I must fall back on Portugal. In the latter case, I fall back upon my resources, upon Lisbon; cover a country where there is a British interest; act as a diversion in favour of Spain, if the French detach a force against me; and am ready to return to the assistance of the Spaniards, should circumstances again render it eligible."

On the day following the date of this communication, intelligence arrived for which Sir John Moore was certainly not unprepared. Castanos had been defeated at Tudela with great loss, and the road to Madrid was now open to the French armies. In this state of things, without waiting for the answer of Mr. Frere, Sir John Moore determined on immediate retreat. With this intention, he transmitted orders to Sir David Baird at Astorga, and Sir John Hope at the Escurial. The former of these officers was directed to retire on Corunna, the latter to push forward, if possible, to Salamanca. Sir David Baird was likewise directed to write immediately to England, that a supply of transports might be sent to the Tagus. "They will be wanted,"

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said Sir John Moore; "for when the French have Spain, *Portugal cannot be defended.*"

Having thus formed his decision, the Commander-in-Chief directed a Council of General Officers to assemble at head-quarters. He laid before them a full statement of the intelligence he had received, and made known the resolution which it had induced him to adopt. His tone was manly and decided. He informed the generals that he had not called them together to request their counsel, or to influence them to commit themselves by giving any opinion on the course he had determined to pursue. He took the responsibility entirely upon himself; and he only required that they would immediately take measures for carrying the plan into effect.

When the resolution of their General was made known to the army, it was received by all ranks with more than murmurs of dissatisfaction and disgust. The British army had suffered no disaster; it had never been brought into contact with the enemy; and all felt that to retreat with untried prowess from the scene of contest, would fix a tarnish on our arms, and, by diminishing

—the confidence of the Spanish nation in our zeal and devotion to their cause, would proportionally contribute to strengthen and consolidate the power of the usurper. Even the personal Staff of Sir John Moore did not attempt to conceal their dissatisfaction at the adoption of a system so adverse to their hopes. All lamented the order for retreat, all felt that it must cast a blight on that cause which they were prepared to defend by the outpouring of their blood.

In his reply to the letter of Sir John Moore, Mr. Frere protested strongly against the measure of retiring on Portugal. He assured him it was one most deeply deprecated by the Spanish government. He urged the expediency of advancing to co-operate in the defence of Madrid, by every argument in his power. "Of the zeal and energy of the people," said Mr. Frere, "I have no doubt. The government are new, and have been hitherto too numerous to be very active; but I trust that this inconvenience will soon be remedied. They are resolute; and I believe every man of them determined to perish with the country. They will not, at least, set the example which the ruling powers, and higher orders of other countries have

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exhibited of weakness and timidity." In case however, the arguments which he most emphatically urged for an advance on Madrid, should not to Sir John Moore appear sufficiently conclusive to authorize the adoption of the measure, Mr. Frere suggested the alternative of taking up a position in the strong country around Astorga. "A retreat from Astorga to Corunna," said the minister, "would be less difficult than through Portugal to Lisbon; and we ought, in that position, to wait for the reinforcements of cavalry from England, which would enable the army to act in the flat country which opens immediately from that point, and extends through the whole of Leon and Old Castile."

The arguments of Mr. Frere did not succeed in changing the opinions of Sir John Moore. He still adhered to the resolution he had previously formed, and only awaited the arrival of Sir John Hope, to commence his retreat on Portugal. This general, when within sixty miles of Salamanca, had been compelled to make a considerable detour in order to avoid the enemy.

In the meantime, the Supreme Junta had despatched two Spanish generals to the head-

quarters of the British army, in order to concert with its commander an united plan of operations. These missionaries corroborated the exaggerated statements of Mr. Frere with regard to the strength of the Spanish armies. They asserted that they were undismayed and increasing every hour; and that General San Juan was in possession of the pass of Somosierra, which he had fortified so strongly, as to render abortive all the enemy's hopes of reaching Madrid. Unfortunately for the credit of the generals, Colonel Graham had just arrived with intelligence that the pass had been already gained by the French. Sir John Moore was filled with perhaps merited contempt for their ignorance and weakness of character, and on that account felt less disposed to accede to their solicitations that he would form a junction with Romana, and thereby create a diversion favourable to the defence of the capital.

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At the head of the Junta, was Don Thomas Morla, who had formerly succeeded Solano as Governor of Cadiz, and now exercised the chief influence at Madrid. The conduct of this man has been attributed to treason; of which the subsequent surrender of Madrid is considered—

CHAP. I. not uncolourably—as the overt consummation.
1808. It has been supposed, therefore, that his object
December. at this period was, by false representations, to draw the British army nearer to the capital, and thus to throw them into the hands of the French. On a review of the whole circumstances, however, we think the imputation unwarranted by proof. The truth we take to be, that Morla was a cold, unprincipled, and selfish man, not unwilling to resist, while resistance did not compromise his own safety, but ready to join the victors, whenever adverse circumstances should threaten to involve his own in the wreck of his country's interests. But even though acquitted of previous treason, enough of infamy will be connected with his name. His acceptance of service under the intruder admits of no palliation; and he will stand recorded as a man whose conduct is irreconcilable with honour or patriotism, and whose base desertion of a noble cause marks him as unworthy to have ever been numbered among its assertors.

From this person, and from the Prince of Castelfranco, Sir John Moore received, on the
Dec. 5. fifth of December, a joint letter, informing him that about twenty-five thousand men of the army

of Castanos were falling back on Madrid; that ten thousand from the Somosierra were likewise concentrating; and that nearly forty thousand other troops were prepared to join in the defence of the capital. With these forces Sir John Moore was strongly invited to unite his army, or else to take such a direction as would enable him to fall on the rear of the French. "The Junta," concluded the letter, "cannot doubt that the rapidity of your Excellency's movements will be such as the interests of both countries require."

Before Sir John Moore had made any decision on the contents of this letter, Colonel Charmilly, a French emigrant in the British service, arrived with despatches from Mr. Frere. On the first of December, Charmilly had been in Madrid. He had witnessed the strongest and most unequivocal demonstrations of ardour among all classes of the people. The whole mass of the population was rising in arms; the streets were broken up, houses barricaded, and peasants from all quarters were flocking into the city, to bear part in the defence. The Duke del Infantado had commissioned him to make known this state of things to the British general, and to entreat

CHAP. I. 1808. December. him to make some movement that might operate as a diversion for the capital, which its defenders had determined to hold out to the last extremity.

In passing Talavera, to which place the Junta and Mr. Frere had retired, the latter strongly enforced the same considerations, and intrusted Charmilly with a letter to Sir John Moore, urging him to relinquish the resolution of retreat. In case, however, this letter should prove ineffectual, he gave Charmilly another, to be delivered only in the event of the General still persisting in his determination.

The first letter of Mr. Frere contained a reiteration of his entreaties, that Sir John Moore would suspend his resolution of retiring on Portugal. The enthusiasm pervading Madrid, he said, so far transcended all his hopes, that he could not forbear urging, in the strongest manner, not only the propriety, but the necessity, of supporting the determination of the Spanish people by every possible assistance. "I have no hesitation," continued Mr. Frere, "in taking upon myself any degree of responsibility which may attach to this advice, as I consider the state of Spain to depend absolutely, for the present, on the reso-

lution you may adopt. I say, *for the present;* for such is the spirit and character of the country, that, even if abandoned by the British, I should by no means despair of ultimate success."

The resolution of Sir John Moore was at length shaken by these official statements. It was impossible to suspect that the Junta would deceive him in a mere matter of fact. He could not suppose that a person of Mr. Frere's known perspicacity had become the dupe of a mere flimsy delusion. Of the ardour and effervescence of the popular spirit, Colonel Charmilly declared himself to have been a personal witness. To discover the real state of affairs, under such representations, when cut off from all sources of more authentic intelligence, was beyond the power of human penetration.

Sir John Moore, therefore, decided on a change of plan. He sent immediate orders to Sir David Baird, directing him to stop his retrogressive march, and to make arrangements for returning to Astorga. In these orders, the caution and prudence of the general were admirably displayed. "The city of Madrid have taken up arms, have refused to capitulate to the

Dated Dec. 5.

CHAP. I. 1808. December. French, are barricading their streets, and say they are determined to suffer every thing rather than submit. This arrests the French; and people who are sanguine entertain great hopes from it. I own, myself, I fear this spirit has arisen too late, and the French are now too strong to be resisted in this manner. However, there is no saying; and I feel myself the more obliged to give it a trial, that Mr. Frere has made a formal representation, which I received this evening. I must beg, therefore, that you will suspend your march until you hear from me again, and make arrangements for your return to Astorga, should it be necessary."

Dec. 6. On the day following, he wrote as follows:—"Let all your preparations, as far as provisions, &c. go, continue to be made for a retreat, in case that should again become necessary. Establish one magazine at Villa Franca, and one or two farther back; to which let salt-meat, biscuit, rum or wines, forage, &c. be brought up from Corunna. Send me, to Zamora, two regiments of cavalry, and one brigade of horse-artillery, keeping one regiment of cavalry, and one brigade of horse-artillery with yourself; and send your troops by brigades

to Benevente. The enemy have nothing at present in that direction; and we must take advantage of it, and, by working double tides, make up for lost time. By means of the cavalry-patrols, you will discover any movements immediately near you; and I take for granted, you have got other channels of information; and both you and me, although we may look big, and determine to get every thing forward, yet we must never lose sight of this, that, at any moment, affairs may take that turn that will render it necessary to retreat."

The preceding order reached Sir David Baird at Villa Franca, late on the seventh of December, when in full retreat on Corunna; and the movement was immediately arrested. The position of the army at Salamanca had now become materially improved. Sir John Hope, who, in order to avoid the enemy, had advanced by a circuitous route, was already at Alba de Tormes, and, by a movement to the left, the junction of the whole army was secure. Dec. 7.

In the meanwhile, the change which had taken place in the mind of the general was unknown in Salamanca. Charmilly, supposing, from the tone of those around him, that the circumstances un-

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der which he was to deliver the second letter had occurred, presented it to Sir John Moore. It ran thus:—

"Sir,—In the event, which I did not wish to presuppose, of your continuing the determination already announced to me, with the army under your command, I have to request that Colonel Charmilly, who is the bearer of this, and whose intelligence has already been referred to, may be examined before a Council of war.—I have, &c. J. H. FRERE."

That Sir John Moore should feel indignant at the receipt of such a letter was natural. He considered Mr. Frere as unwarrantably intruding on his office as Commander of the forces, and attempting to control him, by a Council of war, to act against the dictates of his judgment. He tore the letter in pieces, and dismissed the messenger from his presence. Nor did his resentment rest here. On the day following, Charmilly received an order to quit Salamanca, which, after a fruitless attempt to procure its revocation, he was compelled to obey.

On a calm review of the circumstances connected with this unpleasant collision, we feel little disposed to attribute blame to either party.

—Both unquestionably decided on the purest and most conscientious motives. Both were animated by a vehement desire to act as might most contribute to the honour of their country, and the interest of the common cause.—The style of Mr. Frere, indeed, is somewhat less courteous than might have been expected from so accomplished a diplomatist; and the opinions of Sir John Moore were certainly entitled to greater respect than the minister seemed inclined to accord them; but the question on which they differed was one on which men, zealous for the same end, might arrive at dissimilar conclusions, without imputation on the motives of either.

In truth, the minds of Mr. Frere and Sir John Moore were of different mould and consistency. The one, ardent and enthusiastic, was disposed to rely with too facile a credence on the energy and devotion of the assertors of a noble cause. The other, too strongly disgusted perhaps, with repeated proofs of ignorance and imbecility in the Spanish leaders, regarded the scene around him with the eye of a general. He felt little disposed to anticipate a fortunate issue to the resistance

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which popular enthusiasm might oppose to military skill and highly disciplined troops. They beheld the same events through different *media*. In the picture of the one, the sun was mounting in the horizon, and the landscape was bathed in a flood of prospective radiance. In that of the other, the last rays of departing light had faded from the sky, and the face of nature lay hid in darkness.

The resentment of Sir John Moore however, strong as it might be at the moment of receiving the offence, did not lead him to forget the respect due to the minister of his Sovereign. His answer to Mr. Frere's communications was mild and dignified: "I shall abstain," said he, "from any remark on the two letters delivered to me last night and this morning, by Colonel Charmilly. I certainly did feel and express much indignation at a person like him being made the channel of a communication of that sort from you to me. These feelings are at an end, and I daresay they will never be excited towards you again. If Mr. Charmilly is your friend, it was perhaps natural for you to employ him; but I have prejudices against all that class, and it is impossible for me to put any trust in him." He informed

Mr. Frere, that the order for retreat had been countermanded, and that he had put himself in communication with the Marques de la Romana, at Leon. He declared his readiness to do every thing in his power for the assistance of Madrid and the Spanish cause; but stated the impossibility of a direct movement on the capital, from the circumstance of the passes of Guadarama and Somosierra being already in possession of the French, and from the weakness of his army, until it should have formed a junction with the corps of Sir David Baird.

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Having at length adopted the resolution to advance, Sir John Moore wrote to the Marques de la Romana, informing him of this change in his decision, and expressing a strong wish for the speedy junction of their armies, in order that combined efforts might be made for the support of Madrid. The account of his army, however, given by the Spanish General, was abundantly discouraging. He had twenty thousand men under arms; but they were stated to be in the very worst condition with regard to equipment. The soldiers were without havresacks, cartridge-boxes, or shoes, and many even with-

CHAP. I. out clothing; yet their spirit was undaunted,
1808. and, if sufficiently provisioned, they would dis-
December. charge their duty in the field.

The Marques likewise stated, that he would gladly have formed an immediate junction, with the view of advancing to the relief of the capital, were he not prevented from abandoning his present position by a corps of eight or ten thousand men posted between Sahagun and Almanza, the apparent object of which was to check his movements. Any approach to the British army would leave, to this corps, free ingress into Asturias, from whence he drew large supplies, and would likewise endanger Gallicia. A combined movement with Sir David Baird, however, might oblige them to fall back on Reynosa, and, in that event, he should be ready to unite his army with the English.

Dec. 7. On the seventh, Sir John Moore was informed, by a communication from the Junta of Toledo, that they intended to reunite the dispersed armies in that quarter, and defend the city to the last extremity. In reply, he assured the Junta that, if the rest of Spain were animated by a similar enthusiasm, ultimate success was certain,

by whatever disasters its advent might be impeded or delayed. He assured them they might rely on all practicable assistance from the army he commanded; and sent a British officer to reside at Toledo, and concert measures for its defence. The word of promise, however, though liberally given to the ear, was broken to the hope; for the Junta, on the first approach of a column of the enemy, retired from the city, and it was occupied, without opposition, by the corps of Victor.

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On the ninth, Colonel Graham, who had been despatched to Madrid, returned, with intelligence of its being already in occupation of the enemy. His progress had been arrested at Talavera, where he encountered two members of the Supreme Junta. These informed him that Morla had entered into some agreement with the French, who had already gained possession of the Retiro and Prado of Madrid; that Morla was suspected of treason in this proceeding, having refused admission to the troops of San Juan and Hereida, whose presence would have enabled the inhabitants to defend the city; that Castellar, the Captain-General, and all the military officers of rank, had refused to ratify the capitula-

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CHAP. I. 1808. December. tion, and had left the town, carrying with them sixteen guns; that the inhabitants still retained their arms; that the French army, amounting to about twenty-five thousand, had sufficient occupation in holding the people in subjection; that La Pena, with thirty thousand men, was at Guadalaxara; that fourteen thousand of San Juan's and Hereida's forces were assembling at Almaraz; and that Romana, in Leon, was in command of an army exceeding thirty thousand men.

The fall of Madrid, however, did not deter Sir John Moore from pursuing his projected operations. The great bulk of the French army, which might have been employed against him, had been carried into Catalonia, or towards Madrid; and Sir John Moore considered that, by a forward movement, and effecting a junction with Baird, he would be able to menace the communication of the enemy, thus creating a diversion in favour of those Spaniards who still remained in arms, and giving time for the raising and embodying of new levies in the south. He never ceased, however, to contemplate the necessity of retreat, whenever the British army should become the chief object of the enemy's attention.

It is now necessary that we should take a retrospect of the events more immediately connected with the advance of the French army to Madrid, and its consequent surrender.

After the battle of Tudela, General Maurice Mathieu entered Borja in pursuit of Castanos, having secured a great many prisoners on his march. On the day following he was joined by Marshal Ney. Castanos reached Calatayud in safety, where his followers were exposed to extraordinary privations. No magazines existed for the supply of provisions, the country was exhausted, and the military chest, containing two millions of reals, had been conveyed to Zaragoza. The soldiers, desperate with hunger, were no longer amenable to discipline; and the inhabitants fled from their dwellings, dismayed alike by the conduct of their countrymen and the vicinity of the enemy.

The position of Castanos at Calatayud was sufficiently advantageous. It enabled him to cover the preparations for defence then making at Zaragoza, and, in some degree, to menace the left flank of the enemy on his advance towards the south. From this station, however, he was recalled, by an order from Morla, to assist in the

CHAP. I. 1808. November. defence of the capital. On the twenty-seventh, therefore, he continued his retreat on Siguenza, where he arrived on the day following. During his march the rear-guard, under Don Francisco Venegas, was attacked in the pass of Buvierca; but, after a severe contest, it succeeded in repelling the enemy, though not without considerable loss. At Siguenza, Castanos received a summons from the Central Junta, and resigned the command of the army to Don Manuel de La Pena. This officer was subsequently superseded at Guadalaxara, by the Duke del Infantado. On its retreat towards Valencia, the army was pursued by a body of cavalry and infantry under Bessieres; and, after many difficulties, succeeded in reaching Cuenca, where it was enabled to rally unmolested.

The victory of Tudela at once determined Napoleon to march rapidly on Madrid, with the centre of his army, while the wings continued the pursuit of the defeated Spaniards on the right and left. The advance of the army was commanded by Marshal Victor, who, on the
Nov. 30. thirtieth, arrived in front of the defile of Somosierra, where the road crosses a mountainous chain, about sixty miles distant from the capital.

He found the Spanish army, amounting to about eighteen thousand, strongly posted in the gorge of the mountain. Of these about six thousand were intrenched on the heights of Sepulveda; and General San Juan, with the remainder, occupied the pass. Sixteen pieces of cannon were judiciously placed in battery, on the highest part of the ridge flanking the ascent; and thus favourably posted, the Spanish forces awaited the approach of the enemy.

Marshal Victor at once advanced to the attack of the position of Sepulveda. In this he was repulsed; but the defenders, struck with panic, afterwards forsook their intrenchments, and fled in disorder towards Segovia.

Dec. 1.

On the day following an assault was made on the position of San Juan. Three battalions advanced on the right, three on the left, and three on the centre, under a heavy fire from the Spanish artillery. The heights on either flank were covered with Spanish light infantry, with whom the French maintained a warm, skirmishing fire, unattended by any decided result. At this moment Napoleon arrived, and, halting at the foot of the mountain, carefully examined the posi-

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tion, amid the fire of the enemy. Having completed his observations, he immediately ordered the Polish lancers of his guard to execute a charge on a battery which enfiladed the causeway, by which alone the position was approachable. The first squadron of the column was driven back in confusion by the shower of grape-shot and musquetry which it encountered. Under cover of the succeeding squadrons, however, it was again rallied, and the regiment, sword in hand, charged up the mountain at full speed, and in a moment were in possession of the battery. The Spaniards fled on all hands, dispersing among the hills, with the loss of arms, baggage, ammunition, and artillery. The annals of modern war scarcely afford record of a more daring and singular exploit. The loss of the Polish regiment amounted only to fifty-seven men killed and wounded.

In Segovia, the defeated army united with the troops which had retired from Sepulveda, and, subsequently marching to Guadarama, effected a junction with the corps of Estramadura, under Hereida. With these forces, San Juan, unable to remain in occupation of the pass, from

want of provisions, proceeded to the Escurial, where an order met him to march instantly on the capital.

While executing this order, insubordination spread among his followers, and the great body of the army forsook their ranks and dispersed. When the generals, therefore, approached Madrid, they had with them but a small band of followers; and, discovering that the city had surrendered, they retired on Talavera. To this place the greater number of the deserters had bent their march. By these San Juan was brutally murdered, and his army, being without a rallying point, dispersed.

While the events which we have already detailed, were in progress, the conduct of the government was marked by an inexplicable fatuity Instead of vigorous measures to recruit and re-organize the scattered forces of their armies, the Supreme Junta busied themselves in establishing a special tribunal for the trial of persons suspected of treason; and directed an investigation into the conduct of those who had acknowledged the authority of the usurper. The principles, on which it was provided that the proceedings of this Commission should be

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In this measure, and in others equally unsuited to the circumstances and character of the times, did the Junta waste the precious moments which should have been devoted to matters of deeper importance. But they did worse than this. They adopted the fatal system of deceiving the people with regard to the magnitude and imminence of their danger. Even while the Dated Nov. 21. French threatened the important pass of Somosierra, the Junta addressed a proclamation to the inhabitants of Madrid, declaring that the body by which the capital was menaced amounted only to eight thousand men. They declared that the enthusiasm, with which the soldiers were preparing to defeat the enemies of their country, was great beyond description; that the English were ready to advance from the Escurial, to defend the capital, and support the oper-

ations of the gallant army already gloriously engaged in achieving fresh triumphs.

As soon as the pass of Somosierra was forced, the Supreme Junta retired from Aranjuez to Badajos, leaving a Military Commission, under the presidency of the Marques de Castellar, to conduct the defence of Madrid. Judging from external demonstrations, the enthusiasm of Madrid rivalled that of Zaragoza. The people broke up the pavement in the streets, and intersected them with ditches, barricaded the doors and windows of the houses, erected batteries on the most commanding situations, and planted cannon in the squares and crossings of the streets. There were in the place sixty thousand men under arms, including six thousand troops of the line, all animated with a desire to defend the city to the last extremity.

Unfortunately, however, the people were without confidence in their leaders. A report spread that sand was mixed with the gunpowder in the cartridges. The Marques de Perales was the person upon whom the crime of treason was charged. The mob broke into his house; and before the Duke del Infantado could arrive to his assistance, Perales had been pierced with

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wounds, and his dead body dragged through the streets, amid the exulting execrations of the rabble.

The near approach of the enemy struck the authorities with alarm. They felt little anxious that the city should be subjected to the horrors of a protracted siege, and agreed, should their hopes from without fail, to content themselves with such measures as might prevent the enemy from instantly forcing the town, and induce him to grant favourable terms of capitulation. A diversion by the British might operate in their favour. At all events, it was thought advisable to strengthen the garrison as much as possible. They counted on assistance from the fugitive troops of San Juan, many of which were hourly arriving; and despatched the Duke del Infantado to conduct La Pena's army, with all speed to the capital. On this mission he set out on the second of December.

On the day preceding, the corps of Marshal Ney effected a junction with the army of the centre, by Guadalaxara and Alcala, and head-quarters were advanced to St. Augustino. On the second, the cavalry under Bessieres came in sight of the city, and took possession of the heights. Ma-

drid was in the greatest fermentation. The bells of all the churches rung forth alarm, the priests called the population to arms in defence of their hearths and altars, and the shouting of multitudes, mingling with the loud trumpet peal, gave intelligible intimation to the enemy of the state of the capital. In truth, there were two parties in the city. One consisting of the military, of the armed peasants from the country, and of the poorer class of the people, had no property to lose, and were determined to defend the city to the last extremity. The other comprehended the merchants and principal tradesmen, and all the richer body of inhabitants. These were unwilling to hazard all on the fortune of a cast, and maintained the imprudence of exposing the capital to pillage, by an obstinate and protracted resistance. Jealousies, too, had broken out between the civil and military authorities, and valuable time was wasted in useless altercations, which the urgency of the crisis demanded should be otherwise employed.

In this situation of affairs, Bessieres sent an aid-de-camp into the city with a summons to the

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authorities to open the gates. The mission was one of danger. The officer was seized by the exasperated people, and had he not been opportunely rescued by a party of soldiers, would unquestionably have fallen a victim to their fury.

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A Spanish general, with an escort of thirty men, was despatched to the out-posts of the enemy, with the answer of the authorities to this demand. It stated that the whole population of Madrid were prepared to die in defence of the city. In the meanwhile, the French army was approaching the scene of action. Towards evening, the corps of Victor was sent forward to gain possession of the suburbs on the northern approaches to the city, which, after considerable resistance, was accomplished; and, before nightfall, artillery was posted on the more prominent points of occupation.

At midnight, Berthier despatched a Spanish colonel of artillery, who had been taken prisoner at Somosierra, with a letter to the Marquis de Castellar, exhorting him not to subject the city to the horrors of an assault. To this communication, Castellar replied that before he could give an explicit answer, it was necessary to

ascertain the sentiments of the authorities and the people. For this purpose, he demanded a suspension of arms till the following day.

The request was not granted. On the morning of the third, an attack was made on the Retiro, the favourite palace of Philip the Fourth, which stood on an eminence commanding the city. The place was soon breached by the fire of thirty guns, and carried by assault, with the loss of a thousand of the garrison.

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The French were not contented with this advantage, but immediately pushing on, succeeded, with little difficulty, in gaining possession of the China Manufactory, the great Barrack, the Hotel de Medina Celi, and other buildings commanding the entrances to several of the principal streets.

The arrival of numerous deserters, chiefly of the Walloon guards, gave intelligence to the enemy of the state of feeling in Madrid. The continued success of the French had spread confusion and disorder. The calmness of resolute resistance was wanting, the population was not bound together by the strong tie of mutual confidence amid surrounding danger. In these circumstances, another message was sent into

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the city, stating that the Emperor, unwilling to occasion unnecessary bloodshed, would suspend hostile operations till two o'clock. "To attempt the defence of Madrid," said Berthier, "is against the principles of war, and inhuman for the inhabitants. The Emperor authorizes me to send you a third summons. An immense artillery is already placed in battery; mines are prepared to blow up your principal buildings columns of troops are at the entrances of your city, of which some companies of riflemen are already masters. But the Emperor, always generous in the course of his victories, suspends the attack till two o'clock. The city of Madrid may expect protection and safety for its peaceable inhabitants, for religion and its ministers. The past shall be forgotten. Raise a white flag before the expiration of two hours, and send commissioners to treat for the surrender of the city."

At five o'clock, Morla and Don Bernardo Yriarte arrived at head-quarters. They stated themselves to be charged to demand a cessation of hostilities during the remainder of the day, with the view of giving time to the authorities to dispose the people to surrender. These com-

missioners were ushered into the presence of Napoleon. His reception of them was calculated to inspire terror. On Morla he particularly vented his indignation. He adverted in strong language to the violation of the capitulation of Baylen. His address concluded thus:— "To violate a military treaty is to renounce civilization; it degrades generals to the rank of the Bedouins of the desert. How dare you then to solicit a capitulation, *you* who have violated that of Baylen? See how injustice and bad faith ever recoil on the guilty! I had a fleet at Cadiz; it was in alliance with Spain, and yet you directed against it the mortars of the city where you commanded. I had a Spanish army in my ranks, and rather than disarm it, I would have seen it embark on board the English ships, and be forced afterwards to precipitate it from the summit of the rocks of Espinosa. I would rather have seven thousand more enemies to fight, than be deficient in honour and good faith. Return to Madrid. I give you till six o'clock in the morning; come back at that hour to announce the submission of the people, or you and your troops shall all be put to the sword."

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It was the object of Napoleon, in his treatment of the deputies, to stimulate their fears, in order that the impression they carried with them might be diffused among the populace of Madrid. He was, above all things, anxious that the surrender of the capital should appear the voluntary act of the people—not the traitorous betrayal of their leaders. He felt the importance of propagating the belief that he had entered Madrid, not as an enemy, but amid the acclamations of the inhabitants.

Dec. 4. Early on the morning of the fourth, Morla, and Don Fernando de la Vera, returned to the French head-quarters, announcing that the peaceable inhabitants had consented to receive, with gratitude, the generous offers of the Emperor. At ten o'clock, General Belliard, at the head of a body of French troops, entered the city, and assumed the command. During the night, the armed peasants from the country had returned to their habitations: and Castellar, refusing to sanction the capitulation, with the main body of the troops and sixteen guns, marched out of the city, and effected his retreat.

Dec. 7. On the seventh, Napoleon issued a proclama-

tion to the Spanish nation. He declared they had been misled by perfidious men to engage in a hopeless struggle. What possible result, he asked, could attend even the success of a few campaigns? Nothing but an indefinite protraction of war on their own soil—an endless uncertainty of life and property. Was there one Spaniard amongst them so senseless as not to feel that the nation had been the sport of the eternal enemies of the continent, who took delight in witnessing the effusion of French and Spanish blood? It had cost him but some marches to defeat their armies; he had entered their capital, and the laws of war would justify him by a signal example in washing away, in blood, the insult offered to himself and his country. But he had listened to the voice, not of justice, but of clemency. His wish was to be the regenerator of Spain. All that obstructed their prosperity and greatness he had destroyed; he had broken the fetters which bent the people to the earth. Their destiny now was in their own hands. An absolute monarchy had been displaced by a free constitution. "It depends on yourselves whether this constitution shall continue in your land. But should all my efforts

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prove fruitless, and should you shew yourselves unworthy of my confidence, nothing will remain for me but to treat your country as a conquered province, and to establish my brother on some other throne. I shall then place on my own head the crown of Spain, and cause it to be respected by the guilty. God has given me the will and power to surmount all difficulties."

This proclamation was succeeded by a number of decrees on various subjects. No grant was in future to be made from the public revenue to any individual. The Tribunal of the Inquisition, feudal rights, and the jurisdiction of seigniorial courts of justice, were abolished. The number of convents was reduced to one-third. Most of the members of the Council of Castile were displaced, and declared unworthy of continuing the magistrates of a free nation; and, with few exceptions, a general pardon was granted to all Spaniards, on professing allegiance to the intrusive monarch.

After the fall of the capital, the French still continued to follow up their successes. Toledo

Dec. 11. was occupied by Marshal Victor on the eleventh, and La Mancha became subject to the pillage of his ferocious soldiery. In the meanwhile, the

southern Juntas were employed in fortifying the passes of the Sierra Morena, which were daily expected to become the object of attack. But at that moment the movements of the British army had the effect of diverting the attention of Napoleon; and it was probably expected that the force detached towards Badajos, in pursuit of the retiring Junta, would, in that direction, find easier access to Seville and Cadiz, than over the difficult and giant ranges by which Andalusia is bounded on the north.

When Sir John Moore, therefore, commenced his march from Salamanca, the different corps of the French army were disposed nearly as follows. Marshal Bessieres was pursuing the remains of the central army on the road to Valencia. Victor had entered Toledo. Lefebvre, with a strong division, was marching on Badajos. Mortier was preparing to besiege Zaragoza; Soult to enter Leon; while Napoleon, from Madrid, was ready to support all these movements, and complete the subjugation of Spain. The total of this force was estimated at one hundred and fifty thousand men. That of Sir John Moore amounted altogether to twenty-six thousand nine hundred infantry, and two

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thousand four hundred and fifty cavalry. The artillery was numerous, but of too small a calibre. It consisted of about fifty guns, including a brigade of useless three-pounders.

Dec. 12. On the twelfth, Sir John Moore moved onward from Salamanca. On the thirteenth, head-quarters were at Alaejos. The brigade of General Beresford, and the cavalry under Lord Paget, were at Toro. General Hope was at Torrecillo; the brigade of cavalry, under Brigadier-General Stewart, at Rueda. By the latter, a party of fifty infantry and thirty cavalry, had, on the preceding night, been surprised and cut off. The prisoners declared that it was believed, in the French army, that the English were retreating on Portugal.

Dec. 14. On the fourteenth, Sir John Moore received a despatch from Romana, expressive of his approbation of the movements of the British army, and of his intention to take immediate steps to effect a junction.

On the same day a packet of intercepted letters from the head-quarters of the French army —the bearer of which had been killed by the peasantry—was brought to Sir John Moore. It contained a despatch from Berthier to Soult,

directing him to occupy Leon, Benevente, and Zamora, to drive the Spaniards into Gallicia, and maintain subjection in the flat country. It stated that no annoyance need be apprehended from the English, who were already supposed to be in full retreat on Portugal. But should this not be the case, the movement of the fourth corps on Badajos would speedily realize the anticipation. It likewise appeared from the letter, that Soult was at Saldanha, with two divisions; and that another, under Mortier, had received orders to march on Zaragoza. The eighth corps, commanded by Junot, was stated to have passed the Pyrenees, and would probably be concentrated in Burgos.

It had been the intention of Sir John Moore to push onward to Valladolid; but the intelligence contained in the intercepted despatch, induced him to alter his intention. By this it appeared that the corps of Soult was stronger than he expected; and removing his head-quarters to Toro, he directed Sir David Baird to concentrate his division at Benevente, from which point an union, either by a flank or forward movement, might at any time be effected.

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While Sir John Moore was at Toro, he received another communication from Mr. Frere, written in a tone of ardent remonstrance. Ignorant of the change which had taken place in the plans of the general, it reminded him of the immense responsibility which he assumed, in adopting a measure which must be followed by the immediate, if not the final ruin of our ally, and by indelible disgrace to the country with whose resources he was intrusted. "I am unwilling," continued he, "to enlarge on a subject on which my feelings must be stifled or expressed at the risk of offence, which, with such an interest at stake, I should be unwilling to excite. But this much I must say, that if the British army had been sent for the express purpose of doing the utmost possible mischief to the Spanish cause, with the single exception of not firing a shot against their troops, they would, according to the measures now announced as about to be pursued, have completely fulfilled their purpose."

In this letter Mr. Frere enclosed another from the Supreme Junta to himself, deprecating the resolution of retreat, and urging, in the strongest terms, the advantage of his immediately engag-

ing in active operations against the enemy. The Junta assured Mr. Frere that the enthusiasm of the Spanish people had not been diminished by the recent reverses of their armies, and promised that he should be promptly joined by fourteen thousand men from Romana's army.

The communication of Mr. Frere arrived too late to have any influence on the movements of Sir John Moore. His plans had already been decided. Against his better judgment he had engaged in operations from which he anticipated little beneficial result; and, still contemplating the probability of retreat, he declined assuming the chief command of the Spanish armies, which was at this time offered him.

The difficulties of Sir John Moore were increased by intelligence received from Sir David Baird, that the Marques de la Romana had actually commenced his retreat from Leon on Gallicia. Such information could not fail of producing considerable vexation. Sir John Moore felt how materially his operations would be impeded by this unexpected circumstance; and, on his arrival at Castro Nuevo, he despatched a courier to Romana, soliciting him to retrace his steps, or else, by entering the

CHAP. I. 1808. December. Asturias, afford protection to the left flank of the communication on Corunna. To this, Romana replied that he had commenced his retreat in consequence of intelligence received from Sir David Baird; that he was anxious at the present to do every thing for the relief of Madrid; and prepared to unite in any operation with the English army.

Sir John Moore had now resolved, if possible, to attack Marshal Soult in his position at Saldanha, about eighty miles to the northward of Toro. He considered that even an unprofitable victory could scarcely fail to lend encouragement to the patriots; and, at all events, the forward movement would necessarily draw on him the whole French force in Spain, and thereby create a diversion, which would give the Spanish armies in the south time to rally and recover from the effects of the recent disasters.

Dec. 18. On the eighteenth Sir John Moore moved forward to Castro Nuevo. The head-quarters of Sir David Baird on that day were at Benevente, about forty miles distant. On the nineteenth the march of the army was continued on Villalpando and Valderas. On the

Dec. 20. twentieth the junction with Sir David Baird was

formed at Mayorga. The total effective amount of the combined army, is stated to have been twenty-three thousand infantry, and two thousand five hundred cavalry. About one thousand seven hundred men were on detachment, and four thousand in hospital.

While head-quarters were at Mayorga, several skirmishes took place between the British cavalry and that of the enemy. In Sahagun a detachment of seven hundred French cavalry was reported to be lodged, and Lord Paget deemed it practicable to cut them off. The ground was covered with deep snow, and the weather intensely cold. Lord Paget, however, set forward on his march, and detaching General Slade with the tenth hussars along the Cea to enter the town, he wheeled off with the fifteenth and horse artillery to approach it by a different route. By day-dawn, Lord Paget had reached the town, in front of which he fell in with a piquet of the enemy. It was instantly charged, and all but one man cut down or made prisoners. The escape of this individual, however, gave the alarm; and before the fifteenth could advance, the enemy were discovered drawn up to receive them in an open plain.

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Lord Paget immediately formed line and advanced to the charge. But the success of this manœuvre was prevented by a broad ditch or ravine, hitherto unobserved, which obstructed their progress. Some manœuvring took place between the corps, each endeavouring to gain the flank of the other. By superior skill, Lord Paget at length effected his object. The ravine was passed, and, coming down at full speed on their opponents, the fifteenth overthrew them in a moment. Many of the French were killed, and one hundred and fifty-seven prisoners, including two lieutenant-colonels, were brought back to the British camp as trophies of success. The loss of the fifteenth in this engagement was trifling.

Dec. 21. On the twenty-first the army moved to Sahagun, where Sir John Moore halted for a day to afford refreshment to the troops.

There he received a despatch from Romana, dated Leon, December nineteenth. The Marques expressed his approbation of the measures of Sir John Moore, and his willingness to cooperate in the proposed attack on Soult; but the most extraordinary feature in the letter is, that the writer of it appeared wholly ignorant

of the surrender of Madrid, nearly twenty days before! Another letter, received on the day following, stated that the corps of Soult consisted of about ten thousand men, of which one thousand were cavalry, with eight or ten pieces of artillery; but that Soult, apprehensive of attack, had applied for reinforcements; and, in the meanwhile, had collected the nearest troops, which augmented his force to about eighteen thousand men. These he had posted behind the Carrion. In the proposed operation, Romana offered to unite with nine or ten thousand of his best men, and intimated his readiness to advance immediately on receiving the answer of Sir John Moore.

This letter arrived late on the night of the twenty-second. Early on the following morning, Sir John Moore despatched a messenger to Romana, informing him that he would on the same night march to the town of Carrion, where he had reason to believe that a body of the enemy were collected. "To-morrow," said the General, "I shall march on Saldanha. If your Excellency would march from Mansilla, either direct on Saldanha, or pass the river a little above it, whilst I march on

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from Carrion, I think it would distract the attention of the enemy, and considerably aid my attack. My march from Carrion will probably be in the night. Any information of your movements, I shall thank you to address to me at Carrion, where I shall be at daylight to-morrow."

In consequence of this determination, orders for an immediate advance were issued to the army. The march was to commence at eight o'clock in the evening in two columns. One of these was destined to force the bridge at Carrion, and so penetrate to Saldanha; and this body was already on the road, when a letter arrived from Romana, stating that the French, on the side of Madrid, were in motion to the northward. This intelligence coincided with the information received by Sir John Moore from other quarters. The corps of the enemy, which was directing its march on Badajos, had halted at Talavera. Large supplies of forage and provisions had been ordered in the villages around Palencia. It was said that Napoleon himself, had set out from Madrid, with the avowed intention of proceeding to Benevente without a halt.

Under these circumstances, Sir John Moore determined on retreat, and the march to Carrion was countermanded. He considered that the beneficial object of his movement had already been attained. The progress of the enemy's armies had been arrested in the south, and they were now advancing on all hands to surround him.

Sir John Moore, therefore, felt convinced that nothing but immediate retreat could extricate him from the difficulties of his situation. His intentions were communicated to the Marques de la Romana, in the following words: "I shall take immediate measures for retiring on Astorga. There I shall stand; as my retreat thence, if necessary, will be secure. I shall be in the way to receive the supplies and the reinforcements which I expect from England. At the worst, I can maintain myself, and, with your Excellency's aid, defend the Gallicias, and give time for the formation of the armies in the south, and that which you command, to be prepared, when a joint effort may be made, which can alone be efficacious."

As Sir John Moore had not yet resigned the intention of defending Gallicia, he determined

CHAP. I. 1808. December. on retiring in such a direction as would facilitate the execution of this measure, should it be found desirable. To effect this it was necessary, in the first instance, to cross the Eslar, which could be done by three routes. The first is by Mansilla, where the river is crossed by a bridge. The second by Valencia de San Juan, at which point there is a ferry. The third is by Castro Gonzalo, where there is likewise a bridge, and from whence a road passes to Benevente. As Mansilla was already occupied by the Spanish troops, the two latter routes were preferred, and Astorga was indicated as the place of rendezvous, where it was understood the army would make a stand. In the meanwhile, Romana was expected to keep possession of Mansilla, and defend the city of Leon to the last extremity.

Dec. 24. The day following was employed in preparations for retreat. In the evening, General Hope, with his own division and that of General Fraser, fell back to Mayorga, and Sir David Baird retired to Valencia de San Juan. To conceal this movement, strong patrols of cavalry were pushed on to the advanced posts of the enemy. On the twenty-fifth, the Commander-in-chief followed

General Hope with the reserve and two light brigades. Lord Paget was ordered to remain with the cavalry until the evening, and then to follow the reserve.

Much difficulty was anticipated by Sir John Moore in crossing the Eslar, from the melting of the mountain snows; but, on the twenty-sixth, Sir David Baird reached that river, and crossed it with trifling impediment. The other divisions of the army proceeded, without molestation, to Castro Gonzalo. Dec. 26.

At this moment the British army had become almost girdled by the enemy. From the twenty-second to the twenty-fourth, Soult had received strong reinforcements, and his army alone was already superior in number to the British.

Junot, with the army liberated by the Convention of Cintra, had advanced from Burgos to Palencia, and threatened their right flank.

Napoleon, in person, had set out from Madrid with all the disposable force in that quarter; and on the same day that the van of the British quitted Sahagun, the advanced-guard of this army passed through Tordesillas, a town about fifty miles distant from Benevente.

The corps of Lefebvre had changed the di-

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The whole disposable force of the enemy, forming an irregular crescent, were thus advancing in *radii* on the British army, as a common centre. To cut off its retreat was now the chief object of Napoleon.

Dec. 26. On the twenty-sixth an engagement took place between the British cavalry and that of the enemy. Detachments from the army of Napoleon had been pushed on to Villalpando and Mayorga; and in the neighbourhood of the latter place a considerable force of the enemy was observed to be drawn up on the acclivity of a hill, with the view apparently of cutting off any stragglers who might wander from the line of march. Two squadrons of the tenth hussars were instantly ordered to dislodge them. These, under the command of Colonel Leigh, rode gallantly up the hill, and by a successful charge drove back the French cavalry in confusion. In this affair many of the enemy were killed and wounded, and above one hundred made prisoners.

On the same day the cavalry, the horse artillery, and a brigade of light infantry, halt-

ed at Castro Gonzalo; and the divisions under Generals Hope and Fraser marched to Benevente. On the twenty-seventh the rear-guard crossed the Eslar, and followed the same route, having blown up the bridge. The hardships to which the army were now exposed, tended greatly to increase the general feeling of dissatisfaction at the measures of their leader. The route lay over miserable roads, and through an exhausted country. The weather was more than usually severe; heavy showers of rain and sleet drenched the soldiers to the skin, and it was not always that even at night they could procure shelter from the elements.—Turbulence and insubordination broke forth in the ranks. The soldiers, indignant at the Spaniards, who generally locked their doors on their approach, and concealed their little stock of provisions, were guilty of violence and robbery. These criminal excesses increased the evil. Hatred and disgust sprang up on both sides; and frequent scenes of bloodshed were the consequence.

On the twenty-seventh of December the column reached Benevente; and Sir John Moore issued a general order to the army, Dec. 27.

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characterizing its excesses in strong language. He expressed his deep regret that the army should have forfeited its former praise for exemplary conduct and discipline. The atrocities committed in Valderas, he declared to have exceeded any thing he could have believed of British soldiers. The situation of the army was such as to call for the display of qualities the most rare and valuable in a military body. These were not bravery alone, but patience and constancy under fatigue and hardship, obedience to command, sobriety, firmness, and resolution, in every situation in which they might be placed. It was only by the display of such qualities that the army could deserve the name of soldiers,—that they could be able to withstand the forces opposed to them, or fulfil the expectations of their country.

From Benevente, Sir John Moore despatched a courier to Romana. In the communication of which he was the bearer, Sir John informed the Marques that the enemy were in full advance, and that, on the preceding day, their main-body had reached Valladolid, only three marches to the rear. "I shall continue," he said, "my movement on Astorga. It is there, or behind it,

we should fight a battle, if at all. If the enemy follows so far, he will leave himself more open to the efforts of the south. My opinion is, that a battle is the game of Buonaparte, not ours. We should, if followed, take defensive positions in the mountains, where his cavalry can be of no use; and there either engage him in an unequal contest with us, oblige him to employ a considerable corps to watch us, or to retire upon Madrid; in which last case we should again come forth upon the plain. In this manner we give time for the arrival of reinforcements from England, your army to be formed and equipped, and that of the south to come forth. In short, the game of England and Spain, which must always be the same, is to procrastinate and gain time, and not, if it can be helped, to place the whole stake upon the hazard of a battle."

While at Benevente, where the army halted for two days, intelligence was received that the army of Napoleon were endeavouring, by forced marches, to overtake the British. Under these circumstances, Sir John Moore hasted to continue his retreat. The stores of the army, for which no transport could be procured, were ordered to be destroyed.

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From Benevente to Vigo there are two roads; one passing by Orense, the other by Astorga. The former, though the shortest, was impracticable for artillery, and the army were consequently compelled to retire by the latter. Orders were sent to Sir David Baird, who was still at Valencia, to continue his march on Astorga.

On the twenty-eighth, Generals Hope and Fraser proceeded with their divisions to La
Dec. 29. Banessa. On the twenty-ninth, Sir John Moore followed with the reserve; and Lord Paget was directed to bring up the rear with the cavalry.

The march of the cavalry, however, had not yet commenced, when a body of the enemy's horse were observed to be attempting a ford near the ruins of the bridge which had been blown up; and presently between five and six hundred of the Imperial Guards plunged into the river and crossed over. They were instantly opposed by the piquets under Colonel Otway, which had been appointed to act as a rear-guard. Though this body mustered little more than two hundred men, they boldly advanced against the enemy, and continued bravely to dispute every inch of his advance. Repeated charges took place between the front

squadrons; and upon the arrival of a small party of the third dragoons, the front squadron, by a furious charge, broke through that of the enemy, and were for a time surrounded. By another charge, however, they soon extricated themselves from this dilemma, and re-formed with the rest of the detachments.

Lord Paget soon reached the field, and Brigadier-General Stewart, assuming the command of the piquets, made repeated charges on the enemy, the squadrons being sometimes intermingled. In order to draw the enemy still further from the ford, General Stewart gave ground; when the tenth hussars, which had already formed, advanced to the charge, and the enemy's line was in an instant broken. They fled in great disorder to the river, closely pursued by the tenth, leaving fifty-five killed and wounded on the field, and seventy prisoners, among whom was General Lefebvre, the commander of the Imperial Guard. Immediately on reaching the opposite side of the river, the enemy formed on the margin; but a few rounds from the horse artillery, which came up at that moment, was sufficient to disperse them.

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The loss of the British in this affair, amounted to about fifty killed and wounded.

Towards evening the enemy brought up some field-pieces, and cannonaded the piquets from the heights on the opposite side of the river, but without effect. At night Lord Paget drew off the cavalry, and followed the reserve to La Banessa.

Dec. 30.

On the day following, the British head-quarters were at Astorga, where Sir David Baird's column, coming from Valencia, succeeded in effecting a junction with the main body of the army.

At Astorga another disappointment awaited Sir John Moore. He found the city already occupied by five thousand of the corps of Romana. This general had not destroyed the bridge of Mansilla. The guard he left there was charged by a party of the enemy's cavalry, and driven back in confusion. At Leon no defence had been attempted, and the unexpected presence of the Spanish army at Astorga, interfered materially with the arrangements of Sir John Moore. It had been his opinion that Romana would have most contributed to the good

of the common cause, by retiring on the Asturias; because, when the enemy proceeded to Gallicia, he might have intercepted their convoys, or have compelled them to employ large detachments for their protection. But the passes of the Asturian mountains were blocked up by snow, and Romana was consequently obliged, on the approach of Soult, to push across to Astorga. The consequence was, that all the houses in Astorga were filled with Spanish soldiers; and the roads were literally obstructed with men, horses, cars, and all the other accompaniments of an army, which had foundered or broken down on the march.

It is scarcely possible to conceive any thing more wretched than the condition of Romana's troops. They wanted clothing, accoutrements, arms, ammunition, and even food. A malignant fever had broken out among them, and the number of sick was sustaining hourly augmentation. Never did any congregation of human beings exhibit less external semblance of a military body. The soldiers under arms little exceeded in number the sick borne on cars and mules; and as they passed slowly along, enfeebled and emaciated by disease, the procession had more the

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appearance of an ambulatory hospital, than of a force by which the country was to be defended.

Such was the condition of the army of Romana. Let it also be recorded, that this brave and suffering band bore their multiplied privations with unshrinking patience; that they uniformly displayed, even in the very depth of their misfortunes, a courage and devotion worthy of that cause, in behalf of which they were alike prepared to bleed or suffer.

Before his arrival at Astorga, Sir John Moore, notwithstanding his assurances to Romana, had resigned all thoughts of making a stand in the neighbourhood of that city. From the prisoners made by the cavalry on the preceding day, it was ascertained that the head-quarters of Napoleon's army, had, on the preceding evening, been at Villalpando, a village only sixteen miles distant. No defensive preparations had been attempted, and the General determined to continue the retreat on Villa Franca. Of this measure Romana disapproved. He declared himself ready to join the English army in defending the strong ground around Astorga, from whence a secure retreat would, in any event, be open

to them by the almost impregnable passes of Manzanal and Foncebadon, which a small body might successfully maintain against any numbers.

This project, however, did not meet the approbation of Sir John Moore. Instant preparations were made for retreat. The stores, of which Astorga had been made the depot, were destroyed or distributed among the Spanish troops, and the sick were abandoned to the enemy.

In the miserable condition of the Spanish army, it might have been supposed, that this half-naked, half-armed, half-famished, and diseased multitude, would have sought protection in their retreat from the English columns. It was not so. With a spirit which death alone could extinguish, this suffering but high-minded band, still confided in their own exertions to keep the field; and when Sir John Moore proposed to Romana that he should retire by Orense, the proposal was instantly acceded to. Romana only requested that the British troops might be restrained from the further perpetration of those acts of disgraceful violence, which had hitherto marked their progress: a request which it

CHAP. I. must have imbittered the spirit of Sir John Moore to know that his power was inadequate to grant.

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At Astorga, the light brigades under General Crawford separated from the army, and marched by way of Orense to Vigo, where Sir John Moore had directed transports to be sent for the embarkation of the army. This detachment preceded Romana's army in the line of march; and when the miserable band of patriots, after a halt of only one night, took their way to Orense, they found the country through which they passed already stripped of supplies. This completed the wreck of this gallant but unfortunate army. The infantry at length became completely disorganized, and Romana, with the cavalry and guns, retired to the valley of the Mincio.

1809. Jan. 1.

On the first of January, Napoleon entered Astorga, and formed a junction with Marshal Soult. Leaving Ney, with eighteen thousand men, to keep Leon in subjection, he directed Soult by forced marches to continue the pursuit. This was done with uncommon vigour. On the night of the first, so closely did they already press on the rear of the British, that

their patrols fell in with the piquets of the retiring army. In the meanwhile, Napoleon countermarched with the rest of his army, and in a few days returned to France.

It is melancholy to contemplate the condition to which the British had already been reduced. During the march to Villa Franca, the rain came down in torrents; men and horses, sinking through fatigue, covered the roads; and the soldiers whose strength still enabled them to proceed, maddened by the continued suffering of cold and hunger, were no longer under any subordination. In such circumstances pillage could not be prevented. Wherever they came, the inhabitants fled from their dwellings, and sought shelter among the mountains. Enormities of all kinds were committed. Houses, and even villages, were burning in all directions. The ravages of the most ferocious enemy, could not have exceeded in atrocity those perpetrated by a British army on their allies.

At Benevente, an order had been issued by the General, assuring the army, that the only object of the retiring movement was, not to evacuate the country, but to secure a more favourable position. It had, therefore, been con-

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fidently expected, that a stand would be made at the almost impregnable defiles through which the army passed after quitting Villa Franca. The country had been traversed by Sir David Baird on his advance; and it was generally held incredible that the retreat should be continued beyond that point. The sufferings which the army had already endured, and the lamentable want of discipline to which the rapidity of the retreat had given rise, tended to strengthen the conviction that the General would gladly avail himself of the great defensive advantages which the country afforded. This hope was disappointed. Sir John Moore saw no safety but in embarkation; and the retreat was continued with unrelenting speed.

At every step of their progress, however, the misfortunes of this devoted army seemed to accumulate. The mortality among the horses was excessive; and no sooner did these noble animals become unable to proceed than they were shot, in order to prevent their being serviceable to the enemy. The ammunition-waggons, which had hitherto kept up, were falling one by one to the rear, and the ammunition they contained was destroyed. In the towns, many of the soldiers,

in the recklessness of despair, broke into the cellars, and giving way to the most desperate excess, were found dead by the enemy. During the marches, the number of stragglers was enormous. Under different pretexts, whole regiments strayed from their colours; and, as often as a store or wine-house was discovered, scenes of the most revolting character ensued. The enemy's cavalry was continually pressing on our rear, and, under such circumstances, no pause could be made to afford protection to those who, from intoxication or exhaustion of strength, were compelled to fall behind. At Bembibre, in particular, the town, on the departure of the reserve, was filled with these unfortunate wretches. Every effort was made to save them from the miserable fate which they so madly courted; but in vain. The rear-guard was at length compelled to march. A small detachment of cavalry still remained, in hopes that some, at least, of the victims might be rescued. But the enemy came on in force; and the French dragoons, charging onward through a crowd of men, women, and children, slashed to the right and left with their sabres, sparing neither age nor sex. Never did British troops gaze on a spectacle more appal-

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ling than those who, escaping death, came up bleeding and lacerated, and were, by order of the General, paraded through the ranks as a warning to their comrades.

It is well that these humiliating circumstances should be recorded. It is well that war should be gazed on in all its aspects, and not unprofitable, perhaps, that such episodes should be commemorated in the emblazoned volume of our victories.

Jan. 3.

Since the affair of the twenty-eighth, no engagement had taken place. On the third of January, the advanced-guard of the enemy were seen advancing on Cacabelos. The town is divided by a rivulet, along the banks of which part of the reserve was stationed. On a hill, about half a league in front, were posted the ninety-fifth rifle-corps, and a piquet of cavalry. The General ordered the ninety-fifth to retire, through the town by a bridge. While this order was executing, the French cavalry came on in force, driving the piquet before them, and, charging the rear companies, which had not yet crossed the bridge, succeeded in making some prisoners. The enemy, imagining they had thrown our rear-guard into confu-

sion, immediately advanced a body of dismounted chasseurs, who, dashing forward through the stream with great spirit, attacked the ninety-fifth, which had barely gained time to extend in skirmishing order. The regiment received the attack with admirable steadiness, and, retreating up a hill in rear of the town, took post among some vineyards, from which they continued to gall the enemy by a well-directed fire. From this position the French cavalry attempted to dislodge them, but without success. The ninety-fifth again repulsed them; and they retreated with the loss of a considerable number in killed and wounded. General Colbert, an officer of great gallantry and distinction, was among the number of the former.

In a short time after, a strong body of the enemy's infantry was observed on the opposite hills, in full march on our position. The artillery was instantly ordered to open its fire, which it did with such precision as to check the advance of the French column, which retired with considerable loss, and without firing a shot.

From Villa Franca, the country afforded no field for the action of cavalry; and it was therefore ordered to precede the infantry by forced

CHAP. I. 1809. January. marches to Lugo, where the leading division was directed to concentrate. Towards this point, also, the infantry were pushed on with increased speed, and, if possible, with augmented suffering. The road was bestrewed by the bodies of men dead and dying. But the agonies of women were still more dreadful to behold. Of these, by some strange neglect, or by some mistaken sentiment of humanity, an unusually large proportion had been suffered to accompany the army. Some of these unhappy creatures were taken in labour on the road, and, amid storms of sleet and snow, gave birth to infants, which, with their mothers, perished as soon as they had seen the light. Others, in the unconquerable energy of maternal love, would toil on, with one or two children on their backs; till, on looking round, they perceived that the hapless objects of their attachment were frozen to death. But more frightful even than this, was the depth of moral degradation to which these wretched followers of the camp were frequently reduced. Nothing could be more appalling to the heart, than to hear the dreadful curses and imprecations which burst from the livid lips of intoxicated and despairing women, as they laid them down to die.

"I am well aware," says Lord Londonderry, himself a distinguished actor in the terrible scene, "that the horrors of this retreat have been, again and again, described in terms calculated to freeze the blood of such as read them; but I have no hesitation in saying, that the most harrowing accounts which have yet been laid before the public, fall short of the reality."

On the march to Lugo, detachments of Spanish troops, by whom this precipitate abandonment of their country had not been anticipated, were met escorting convoys of cannon, ammunition, clothing, and stores, to the front. These were assailed with outrage and abuse by the British soldiers; and, quitting their charge, were glad to escape with their cattle, leaving the carriages to encumber the road. A large convoy, of between thirty and forty waggons, with stores for the army of Romana, was met near Nogales. These were now useless. Some were distributed to the troops as they passed—the remainder was destroyed. Near Constantino the road crosses a hill, which Sir John Moore was apprehensive would be taken advantage of by the French, to annoy the descending

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column. The rifle corps and horse-artillery were ordered, therefore, to halt on its summit, and obstruct the enemy's advance. The position, thus assumed, was formidable; and, in order to avoid exposure to the British guns, the French halted behind another hill for above half an hour. The reserve, in the meanwhile, continued its march; and no sooner had the rear crossed the bridge of Constantino, than the artillery and rifle corps suddenly retired, and the whole passed the river without loss. General Paget, with the reserve, then took post to defend the bridge. The enemy advanced their cavalry and dismounted chasseurs, and endeavoured, ineffectually, to force the post. They were driven back by a well-directed fire. At eleven at night General Paget received orders to fall back on Lugo.

The distance between Villa Franca and Lugo, was accomplished by the reserve in forty-eight hours. During this march, likewise, a quantity of valuable stores was destroyed, and two waggon-loads of dollars fell behind. Every effort for the further transport of the treasure having proved abortive, the casks containing it

were rolled down a precipice, in hopes that the snow might conceal it from the observation of the enemy.

But even with all these sacrifices, the necessity of repose to recruit the exhausted soldiers became at length apparent to Sir John Moore. At Lugo, the army halted on the sixth; and the General took up a position in front of the town, with the intention of offering battle to the enemy. Never did any measure produce a more striking and instantaneous revulsion of feeling in the troops. Insubordination was at an end,—stragglers hastened to join their regiments,—worn frames became reanimated with vigour,—and the promiscuous assemblage of disorderly soldiers, became again invested with all the attributes of a disciplined army. Jan. 6.

It was at length ascertained by the General, that Corunna was a more eligible place for embarkation than Vigo; and as it besides possessed the advantage of being considerably nearer, it was determined to direct the march of the army on that point. Orders, therefore, had been despatched to recall the light brigades and the division of General Fraser, which had been previously directed to proceed to Vigo. These or-

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ders were transmitted to Sir David Baird by a staff-officer; but the orderly-dragoon who was employed by Sir David Baird to convey the despatch to its destination, unfortunately got drunk, and lost it. This occurrence was productive of the worst effects. General Fraser's troops had proceeded a full day on their march before the order reached them; and, in consequence, without food or rest, were compelled to retrace their steps, and arrived at Lugo with the loss of four hundred of their number.

The ground on which Sir John Moore proposed to receive the enemy's attack at Lugo, was selected with skill. The right of the position rested on the Tamboga; its front extended along the sides of a strong ravine; and the left, somewhat withdrawn, was protected by precipitous acclivities.

About mid-day on the sixth, the French columns were observed to be advancing on the English position. Preparation was immediately made for their reception; but no engagement ensued. The French took possession of a strong mountainous ridge in front of the British; and, formed in order of battle, seemed to challenge attack. For several hours did the lines thus

continue gazing on each other, without hostile movement on either side. The hope of battle gradually faded; at last evening closed, and the troops returned to their quarters.

Jan. 7.

On the following morning the enemy advanced four guns, protected by a few squadrons of cavalry, towards the centre, and commenced a sharp cannonade. The fire was immediately returned by the English, with such effect, that one of their guns was dismounted, and the rest silenced. For above an hour no further hostilities took place. The enemy then made a feint on the British right, in order to cover the advance of five guns, and a strong column of infantry on the left. Sir John Moore immediately rode at full speed to that part of the line. In the meanwhile, a warm skirmish had taken place with the piquets, which were driven hastily back. The enemy's column were already ascending the height occupied by the seventy-sixth regiment, which gradually fell back, until joined by the fifty-first, when, after a few discharges of musketry, these regiments advanced to the charge, and drove back the French in confusion. The setting in of night again disappointed the hope of immediate engagement; and the British

CHAP. I. army retired to their quarters, with the fervent wish that the dawn of morning might light them to battle.

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Sir John Moore was impressed with the conviction, that this wish would be realized. He considered the preceding attack as made only, by Marshal Soult, with the view of reconnoitring the strength of the force opposed to him, and expected that the day following would produce a more general engagement. In this he was disappointed. On the morning of the eighth the French were still observed in their position; yet hour after hour passed, and they made no movement. At length night fell, and with it fell all the fond hopes of battle which had been cherished by the army. In order to deceive the enemy, large fires were lighted along the line; and at ten o'clock the British army again commenced their retreat.

Jan. 8.

No sooner did Marshal Soult become aware of the evasion of his enemy, than the pursuit was immediately recommenced, and followed up with unabated vigour; but the British had already gained so much ground, that it was not till the evening that the enemy's advanced-guard came up with the rear. The horrors of

this march were of the most aggravated description. The night was dark and stormy, the cold intense, and the sleet fell heavily. The troops, already jaded and half-famished, and many of them barefoot, marched along roads knee-deep in mud. Insubordination again spread among the ranks,—and the number of stragglers was enormous.

About ten in the morning the army arrived at Valmeda. Here positive exhaustion compelled a halt; and the men lay on the open ground for several hours, exposed to the continual action of a heavy rain. But even this brief interval was not granted to undisturbed repose. A cry arose, from time to time, that the enemy were advancing; and, at each alarm, the troops were ordered to fall in. Such an intermission was little calculated to refresh the worn strength of the soldiers; and, towards evening, when they again resumed their march, little benefit was found to have resulted from the halt. Jan. 9.

On the tenth, the army halted at Betanzos; and General Paget, with the reserve, remained in position, a few miles in front of that town, for the protection of the stragglers. The con- Jan. 10.

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duct of this officer, and the troops he commanded, throughout the retreat, was such as to command the admiration of the army. The reserve marched better, and bore their sufferings with greater resolution than any other portion of the troops; and the skill, promptitude, and unwearied vigilance of General Paget, were, on every occasion, remarkable.

From Betanzos, the army accomplished its march to Corunna, with little molestation from the enemy. A bridge near the town was attempted to be destroyed, but without success. At Astorga the General had ordered the whole of the engineers' equipments to be burned; and the army were thus most imprudently deprived of the power of impeding the progress of the enemy, which the destruction of the numerous bridges would have afforded. Near Corunna, however, the bridge across the Mero was blown up, the necessary tools for the purpose having been brought from the town; but owing to the premature explosion of a mine, the superintending-officer of engineers was killed.

The army had now reached their destined point of embarkation, but the transports had not yet arrived from Vigo. Only a few ships lay in

the harbour, on board of which the sick, who preceded the army, were immediately embarked; and it became necessary that the army should assume a position, and once more shew front to the enemy. That this necessity was imposed on Sir John Moore, never to any Englishman can be matter of regret. It saved the British army from the disgrace of having quitted Spain like downcast and disheartened fugitives,—of having sought refuge in their ships from the hostility of an enemy, with whom they had never measured strength in combat.

Sir John Moore preceded the army on its march to Corunna, and surveyed the country in its neighbourhood. There were two ranges of heights in front of the town. The higher and more distant of these would, unquestionably, have afforded a position of considerable strength, had the numerical force of the army been sufficient for its occupation. But, as this was not the case, it became necessary to occupy the nearer range, though of inferior altitude. Such, however, were the disadvantages of this position, that some of the general-officers recommended Sir John Moore to propose terms to Soult, in order to induce him to permit the army to em-

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bark unmolested. Sir John Moore, however, declared himself averse from adopting this melancholy and disgraceful alternative; and, besides, was exceedingly doubtful whether any such proposal, if made, would be attended with success. Most fortunately, therefore, for his own fame, and most fortunately for the honour of the army he commanded, this degrading counsel was rejected,—and England was not destined to blush for her sons.

The enemy were now rapidly collecting on the Mero, and it became necessary that arrangements should be promptly made for the impending battle. The division of General Hope was directed to occupy a ridge on the left, commanding the road to Betanzos, and sloping with a gradual declivity towards Elvina. The post of Sir David Baird's division was on the right, extending from Elvina along a series of heights, which bent, in an oblique direction, towards the front, and terminated in a valley, which divided this range from another on the opposite side of the Vigo road. The rifle corps was ordered to form a chain across the valley. The reserve, under General Paget, was posted at Airis, a small village in rear of the centre.

The left flank of this position was well protected by the high banks of the Mero, but the right was weak; it rested on the village of Elvina, situated low down, at the extremity of the hills on which the front of the army was formed. To remedy this defect, the division of General Fraser was posted about half-a-mile in rear of the right, on some high ground commanding the road to Vigo. The artillery was disposed along the front of the line.

Jan. 13. During the whole of the thirteenth, Sir John Moore was occupied in making these dispositions. Having completed them, he returned to his quarters, and, writing his last despatch, directed Brigadier-General Stewart to proceed with it to England.

Jan. 14. On the fourteenth, the enemy commenced a cannonade on the left, which was returned by the British artillery, with such effect, that the French at last drew off their guns.

In the evening the transports from Vigo hove in sight.

On the heights, about a league distant from the town, was a powder-magazine, which it was deemed advisable to destroy. It contained about four thousand barrels of gunpowder, which

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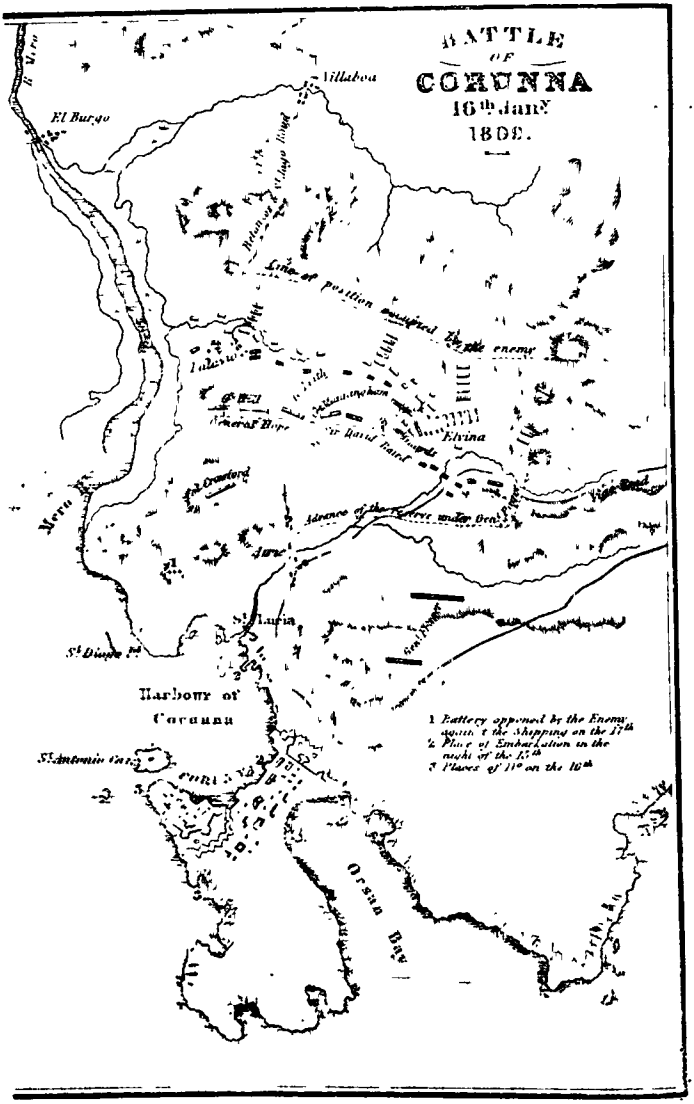
had been brought from England some months before, and, by an unpardonable negligence, had been suffered to remain in store, while the Spanish armies were without ammunition! A few hundred barrels had, on the preceding day, been removed to Corunna—the remainder was directed to be blown up. The explosion was tremendous. Corunna shook as if convulsed by an earthquake. Huge masses of rock were cast from their pedestals. The calm waters in the bay became furiously agitated. A vast column of smoke and dust arose perpendicularly and slowly to a great height, and then bursting with a roaring sound, a shower of stones, and fragments of all kinds, reverted to the earth, killing several persons who incautiously had remained too near to the scene of peril. A stillness, only interrupted by the lashing of the waves on the shore, succeeded—and the business of war went on.

Napier.

On the arrival of the transports, preparations were immediately made for the embarkation of the army. With the exception of eight British, and four Spanish guns, the artillery was sent on board—the ground being considered unfavourable for its use. The dismounted cavalry and a


BATTLE
OF
CORUNNA
16th Janr
1809.
Villaboa
El Burgo
Line of position occupied by the enemy
Elvina
Mero
Harbour of
Coruna
St Antonio Castle
Orsana Bay
1 Battery opposed by the Enemy
2 Place of Embarkation in the
night of the 17th
3 Places of 11th on the 16th

few horses were likewise embarked,—the remainder were shot.

The bridge of El Burgo having been repaired, two divisions of infantry, and one of cavalry, passed the Mero, and, driving back the British outposts, marched into position. On the fifteenth, Delaborde's division followed, and took post on the height of Portoso, forming the right of the army. The ground thus chosen by the enemy, was the ridge of rocky and irregular heights by which the British position was nearly encompassed. Their right was placed on the Betanzos and St. Jago roads, and their left rested on a hill covered with wood, overlooking the British line, of which, after some resistance from the light troops, they succeeded in gaining possession.

Jan. 15.

In the evening Colonel Mackenzie of the fifth, perceived two of the enemy's guns not far distant, and imagined that by a sudden attack he might surprise them. The attempt failed. Colonel Mackenzie was killed during the advance, and his party were driven back with loss.

During the night of the fifteenth, Marshal Soult succeeded in establishing a battery of eleven guns, on the wooded hill at the extremity of his

CHAP. I. 1809. January. left. This was an operation of great difficulty. The ground was rugged; the French were in possession of no road, and the horses were weak and exhausted. By great exertion, however, the object was accomplished; and the French thus acquired a decided superiority in point of artillery.

Jan. 16. The preparations for embarking were completed on the morning of the sixteenth, and Sir John Moore gave notice, that, in case the enemy should not move during the day, the embarkation of the reserve should commence at four o'clock. The tranquillity of the armies remained undisturbed till noon, when the General, mounting his horse, rode off to visit the outposts. He had not proceeded far, when he received a report from General Hope, stating that the enemy's line were getting under arms; and a deserter who came in at the same moment confirmed the intelligence. He spurred forward. The piquets had already opened fire on the enemy's light troops, which were pouring rapidly down on the right wing. A heavy fire was shortly opened from the French battery on the height; the piquets were driven rapidly back; and four strong columns of the enemy, supported

by a reserve, were observed descending the hill. Two of these—one emerging from a wood, the other skirting its edge—threatened the right of the position; another directed its march on the centre; and the fourth on the left. The two first of these columns advanced with rapidity, and, by a bold attack, at once carried the village of Elvina. Thus far successful, they endeavoured to turn the right of the position. It was defended by Lord William Bentinck's brigade, having the brigade of Guards in their rear. In order to prevent the success of this manœuvre, General Paget was ordered to advance with the reserve, and take post on the right of the line.

Lord William Bentinck's brigade received the attack with firmness; and the fourth regiment, being thrown back *en potence*, met the enemy with a well-directed fire. The order was at length given to charge; and the forty-second and fiftieth regiments advanced to regain the village of Elvina. The ground around the village was so intersected by walls and enclosures as to prevent any general collision. A severe but irregular fight ensued, which terminated in the French being driven back with great loss. The fiftieth regiment, led by Major Napier, rushed

CHAP. I. 1809. January. into Elvina, and with great gallantry drove out the enemy with the bayonet, and pursued him for some distance beyond it.

In the meanwhile, from some misapprehension, the forty-second had retired; and the enemy being reinforced, took advantage of that circumstance to renew the conflict. Elvina became again the scene of struggle; the forty-second, after a brief but animating address from the General, returned to the attack; and the Guards being brought up to their support, the enemy gave way.

It was at this period of the action that Sir John Moore received his death wound. He was engaged in watching the result of the contest about Elvina, when a cannon shot struck him on the breast and beat him to the ground. He raised himself immediately to a sitting posture, and continued with a calm gaze to regard the regiments engaged in his front. Captain Hardinge threw himself from his horse, and took him by the hand; then, observing his anxiety, he told him the forty-second were advancing, and on this intelligence his countenance was observed to brighten.

His friend Colonel Graham now dismounted,

and from the composure of his features, entertained hopes that he was not even wounded; but observing the horrid laceration and effusion of blood he rode off for surgical assistance.

Sir John Moore was removed from the field by a party of the forty-second. As the soldiers placed him in a blanket, his sword became entangled, and the hilt entered the wound. Captain Hardinge attempted to take it off, but he stopped him, saying, "It is as well as it is, I had rather it should go out of the field with me." Sir David Baird had previously been disabled by a severe wound; and the command of the army now devolved on General Hope.

In the meanwhile all went prosperously in the field. The reserve pushed on to the right, and, driving back the enemy, continued advancing on their flank, overthrowing every thing before them. The enemy, perceiving their left wing to be exposed, drew it entirely back.

An attack made on the British centre, was successfully resisted by the brigades of Generals Manningham and Leith. The ground in that quarter being more elevated and favourable for artillery, the guns were of great service.

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On the left, the enemy had taken possession of the village of Palavio on the road to Betanzos. From this a fire was still kept up by their troops, till Colonel Nichols, at the head of some companies of the fourteenth, attacked it and beat them out.

Day was now fast closing; and the enemy had lost ground in all parts of the field. The firing, however, still continued, and night alone brought the contest to a close.

Thus ended the battle of Corunna. Let no man say that it was fought in vain, because it was attended with no result of immediate benefit to the victorious army. It gave a glorious termination to an inglorious retreat. It vindicated, in the eyes of Europe, the character of the army. It embalmed the memory of their commander in the hearts of his countrymen. It erased a dark stain from the military blazon of England. It gave to the world an imperishable proof, that, after a retreat of unexampled suffering and privation, the firmness of British troops remained unshaken. The courage of her sons was assayed by the ordeal of fire, and it is, and will be, the pride of England, that it came forth pure gold from the furnace.

While Sir John Moore was removing from the field, the expression of his countenance remained unchanged, and he gave utterance to no expression of pain. From this circumstance, Captain Hardinge gathered temporary hope that the wound might not be mortal, and expressed it to the dying General. Hearing this, he turned his head for a moment, and looking steadfastly at the wound, said, "*No, Hardinge, I feel that to be impossible.*" Several times he caused his attendants to stop and turn him round, that he might gaze on the field of battle, and when the firing indicated the advance of the British, he signified his satisfaction, and permitted the bearers to proceed.

On examination by the surgeons, the wound of Sir John Moore was at once pronounced to be mortal, and from increasing pain he could speak but with difficulty. Observing his friend Colonel Anderson by his bed, he asked if the French were beaten, and then said, "*You know, Anderson, I have always wished to die this way. You will see my friends as soon as you can. Tell them every thing. Say to my mother*"—Here his voice failed from agitation, and he did not again

CHAP. I. venture to name her. When his strength was fast waning, and little more than a glimmering of life remained, he said to Colonel Anderson, "*I hope the people of England will be satisfied! I hope my country will do me justice.*" After a while, he pressed the hand of Colonel Anderson to his body; and in a few minutes died without a struggle.

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Thus fell Sir John Moore. Kind in feeling, generous in spirit, dauntless in heart,—no man was more beloved; none more lamented. Other leaders have been more fortunate in life; none were ever more glorious in death. Whatever may have been the military errors of such a man, however little the cast and temper of his mind may have fitted him for the task he was called on to discharge, at a crisis of peculiar difficulty, what is there in this,—what is there in any failing which even malice has ventured to charge on Sir John Moore, that England should quench her pride in so noble a son? Columns may rise to others, and temples and triumphal arches may consecrate a nation's gratitude in the memory of posterity to warriors of prouder fame and more brilliant achievement; but the name

of Moore will *not* die. It will be loved and honoured in all after generations, and his memory will stand undimmed by time, κτημα ἐς ἀει.

The night succeeding the action was passed in the embarkation of the troops. At ten o'clock they moved off the field by brigades, and marched down to Corunna. Major-General Beresford was posted with the rear-guard, on the lines fronting Corunna, to watch the motions of the enemy. Major-General Hill, with his brigade, was stationed on an eminence behind the town, ready to afford support to Beresford, if necessary. The embarkation proceeded rapidly during the night, and no attempt was made to molest the covering brigades. On the following morning, however, the enemy pushed forward a corps of light troops to the heights of St. Lucia, which commanded the harbour, and, planting a few cannon, fired at the transports. At three o'clock, General Hill's brigade was withdrawn, and at night the rear-guard embarked without molestation from the enemy.

Jan. 17.

At twelve o'clock, on the night of the sixteenth, the remains of Sir John Moore were removed to the citadel of Corunna. He had

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often said, that, if killed in battle, he wished to be buried where he fell; and it was determined that the body should be interred on the rampart of the citadel. A grave was dug by a party of the ninth regiment, the Aides-de-camp attending by turns. No coffin could be procured; and the body, without being undressed, was wrapt by the officers of his staff in a military cloak and blankets. The interment was hastened, for, about eight in the morning, the sound of firing was heard, and they feared that, in the event of a serious attack, they might be prevented from paying the last duties to their General.

The body was borne to the grave by the officers of his family; the funeral service was read by the chaplain; the corpse was covered with earth; and Sir John Moore "was left alone with his glory."

During the retreat to Corunna, his country sustained a severe loss in the death of Major-General Anstruther. No man had more honourably distinguished himself by zeal, gallantry, and talent. He died of inflammation of the lungs, brought on by exposure to the extreme inclemency of the weather. His devotion to the service induced him to neglect the precau-

tions and remedies his situation required; and he continued to perform his duty till approaching dissolution rendered farther exertion impossible. When no longer able to mount his horse, he was placed in a carriage, and conveyed to Corunna. There he expired amid the universal regret of his fellow-soldiers; and his remains were deposited in a grave on the ramparts, near that of his commander.

The campaign of Sir John Moore has perhaps given rise to greater differences of opinion than any other portion of the Spanish war. Almost every operation by which its progress was marked has been made to furnish matter for vehement and angry discussion. By one party, the combinations of the General have been indiscriminately lauded as a masterpiece of strategy; by another, the misfortunes of the army are considered to have solely originated in the vacillation and timidity of its leader. Friends have praised, enemies have abused, and both have at last rested in conclusions from which more unbiassed reasoners will probably feel inclined to dissent. The indiscriminating defenders of Sir John Moore are actuated by motives, generous though mistaken; his opponents, by somewhat more of

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personal and political prejudice, than can be made to comport with the character of disinterested and impartial inquirers after abstract truth.

But, thank Heaven! party spirit is not eternal, though truth is. Twenty years have passed since the retreat to Corunna, and the time has at length come, when it is possible to write with strict justice and impartiality of Sir John Moore. In doing so, there is no fear of derogating from his just and well-earned reputation. The fame of Moore is not, as the injudicious eulogies of his friends would leave us to believe, a sickly and infirm bantling, which requires to be nursed and cockered into life by praise and puffery. The column of his honour rests, not on any single achievement of extraordinary genius, but on the broad pedestal of a life actively, zealously, and successfully devoted to his country's service, of a character marked by a singular combination of high and noble qualities, and of a death worthy of such a character and such a life.

Nothing, perhaps, can now be said of Sir John Moore's campaign which shall be found either new or original; and he who is neither influenced

by the zeal of a partisan, nor the hostile vehemence of a declared opponent, may be expected rather to restrict both the praises and the censures of his predecessors within due limits, than to furnish novelty of thought or illustration, on topics which have so frequently been made the subject of ardent and copious discussion. This fact is undoubted, that, in the very outset of the campaign, Sir John Moore was placed by his government in a situation of difficulty, to which no General should be deliberately exposed. He was sent into Spain without any concerted scheme of operations, or the possibility of forming one. He was left utterly in the dark, with regard to the plans of the Spanish Government. He was without any organized channel of communication with the chiefs of the armies; and the fundamental assumption on which he had been directed to rely, was soon proved to be fallacious. He was not enabled to concentrate his forces under the protection of the Spanish armies on the Ebro. These were successively defeated; and Sir John Moore, before he could effect a junction with the divisions of Baird and Hope, found himself exposed to an enemy, who

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CHAP. I. might at any moment take advantage of his situation and force him to retreat.

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At Salamanca, therefore, Sir John Moore was surrounded on all hands by circumstances of peril. Yet part of his difficulties must be admitted to have proceeded from his own arrangements. Deceived by an imperfect survey of the roads in Portugal, while the infantry proceeded by Almeida, the cavalry and artillery were directed to advance by Merida and Truxillo; and the consequence was, that the difficulty of collecting his army was prodigiously enhanced, and Sir John Moore was compelled to remain above a month inactive at Salamanca. Precious time was thus lost. The thoughts of the General were bent only on retreat. The army did not move till the eleventh hour, and action was unfortunately delayed till the precise period when action could no longer be available.

Had Sir John Moore, when he first announced the resolution of retiring on Portugal, adhered steadily to his purpose, we know not that the measure, in a merely military point of view, could be held liable to censure. An army on certain calcutions had been advanced into Spain. These, by

a succession of unforeseen events, had been utterly nullified. The relative conditions of the hostile parties, which had formed the very basis of the measure, had undergone a sudden revolution. The Spanish forces had not only been defeated, but dispersed; and a retreat on Portugal might only be regarded as the withdrawal of an army from a point where its services could be of trifling avail, to another where it might operate with greater efficacy on the fortunes of the war.

But, in such a case, the measure of retreat cannot be regarded as an independent military operation. The moral influence it could not fail to exert must likewise be regarded. The Spanish nation would have considered it as a disgraceful dereliction of their cause. It would have depressed the spirit of the people; and thus would have operated injuriously in every quarter, where resistance was yet offered to the enemy. To that enemy it would have lent encouragement; nor do we think, in a comprehensive view of all the circumstances, the step would have admitted of vindication, unless it could be satisfactorily proved that the safety of the army imperiously demanded its adoption. It

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is in *necessity* alone that a full justification of retreat could be found; and it is by a reference to the existence or non-existence of such necessity, that its wisdom must be judged.

In this view of the question, it has been matter of regret to many, that Sir John Moore was not led to regard with a more favourable eye the project of defending Gallicia. No part of Spain offers equal advantages for a defensive war. Its natural strength is very great; and, by judiciously occupying its almost impracticable defiles, an army could maintain its ground against an enemy of immense numerical superiority. The geographical position of Gallicia is likewise highly favourable. By means of its numerous sea-ports, an easy and rapid intercourse, might be maintained with England. Protected by a strong frontier from the direct line of the enemy's operations, its proximity to it was still so great, as continually to endanger his communications. A victory achieved at any time by an army on the border of Gallicia, must have paralysed the operations of the enemy throughout the whole peninsula. The mere presence of a British force in that quarter must have prodigiously increased the dif-

ficulties of Napoleon. It would have demanded the continual employment of an army greatly superior, to watch its operations; it would have narrowed, cramped, and hampered the whole schemes of the enemy; it would have lent new spirit and vigour to the Spanish people; it would have constantly acted as a powerful diversion in favour of the Spanish armies in every part of the peninsula.

The documents given in the Appendix to Colonel Napier's history, abundantly prove that it was to this quarter that the anxieties of Napoleon were chiefly directed.* In the preceding campaign he repeatedly expresses his conviction that it was by the Gallician army alone that a blow could be struck by which Madrid might be endangered. In a communication, written under his dictation to Savary, he expresses his opinions on this matter very strongly. He declares that the occurrence of the smallest reverse to Marshal Bessieres—then commanding in Leon—would cut off the whole

* Vide page 233 of the first volume, in which some extracts relative to this subject are given.

CHAP. I. communications of the army, and even compromise its safety.

1809. January. Such being the importance of Gallicia, and such the extended influence which an army, posted on its frontier, must have exercised on the war in every part of the peninsula, it will probably, we think, to an impartial observer, appear extraordinary, that Sir John Moore, with this important province within his grasp, should never have adopted any serious measures for its occupation. That the subject was brought under his consideration, the following extract of a letter from Sir David Baird, will shew.

Dated. Dec. 8. "It has often occurred to me," says that distinguished officer, "that in the event of our being obliged to adopt defensive measures, it might be more advantageous for the combined British army to cover Gallicia and part of Leon, than by my proceeding to join you at Salamanca, to abandon the defence of these provinces. The Asturias might be occupied by the troops of the Marques de la Romana, and, if you judged it proper, by a flank movement, to join us in the neighbourhood of Astorga, I entertain a confident belief that, by occupying the strong ground behind it, we should be able to cover the country in our rear, and might wait until it is seen what efforts

the Spanish nation is disposed and determined to make in defence of the national independence. The royal road from Corunna to this place (Villa Franca) and Astorga is remarkably good, although mountainous; and, with the sea open to us, we should be able to receive with facility such reinforcements and supplies as the British Government might deem it proper to send. I do not think much difficulty would be experienced for a few months, from a want of provisions. The country abounds with cattle: bread indeed would be required; but flour might be obtained from England; and, in the meantime, Gallicia would have an opportunity of arming under our protection, and our presence in Spain would furnish a rallying point, and act as a stimulus to the Spaniards, &c."

To the project, thus enforced by Sir David Baird, Sir John Moore stated no objection. His reply was as follows:—

"I am much obliged to you, for your opinion on the Gallicias and Vigo, and it is that which now probably I shall follow, should such a measure become necessary. I am, therefore, most anxious that magazines should be formed on that communication. I have written home to direct

CHAP. I. 1809. January. that all transports, &c. should call at Corunna, and go to Vigo, unless otherwise directed. Corunna must be the place for all supplies from England. The communication through Portugal is difficult and tardy."

Unfortunately, Sir John Moore seems to have regarded the assumption of a defensive position on the Gallician frontier, and the permanent defence of that province, as a sort of *dernier ressort*, to be adopted only when the more perilous experiment of advancing on Valladolid or Saldanha should have been tried. The experiment was tried, and failed. The British army retreated, not to defend Gallicia, but to their ships. No minute and accurate knowledge was acquired of the localities of the country; no positions had been fortified; no depots established; and, indefatigably pursued by a powerful enemy, the contemplated project of defending Gallicia—if seriously contemplated it ever was—at once vanished into thin air.

But Gallicia did not afford the only sphere of operation, in which the army might have been employed with comparative benefit and safety. Sir John Moore might have retired across the Tagus, where, in a country of great strength

his army might have served as a rallying point, and a protection to the Spaniards in the southern provinces, to which the enemy had not yet penetrated. There it was that he was most dreaded by Napoleon, and there he would have created a diversion at least as efficacious as that of the advance on Saldanha, without incurring the inordinate risks by which that operation was attended. It is no objection to the policy of this measure to assert, that the opportunity thus afforded to the people of rallying round the standard of their country, would probably have been neglected. This may be so, and Sir John Moore was professedly a nullifidian in Spanish energy and patriotism; but the true question is, would not the army, if thus employed, have afforded a greater quantum of protection to our allies, with a smaller quantum of risk than was incurred by the advance to Sahagun, consequent on the concentration of the army.

Rocca.

Victoires et Conquetes.

Of that operation we would now speak. That it was one of extreme temerity is scarcely to be denied; that it was productive of the most calamitous consequences we unfortunately know.

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Sir John Moore had proceeded to Alaejos, with the intention of concentrating his forces in the neighbourhood of Valladolid, when the information derived from an intercepted despatch, induced him to change his plans, and advance against Soult at Saldanha, in hope of bringing him to action before the arrival of reinforcements. Never surely was an offensive operation undertaken on the chance of a more improbable contingency. Sir John Moore could scarcely calculate on the blunders of an opponent so skilful and experienced in the game of war. Yet, by some gross and inconceivable blunder alone, could Marshal Soult have suffered himself, in the circumstances of his army, to be drawn into a battle. Soult's policy manifestly was to retreat, not to fight; to induce his enemy to advance, and thereby give time for the coming up of forces, already on the march, by which his retreat would be cut off. On the advance of the British, Soult, as a matter of course, would have fallen back on Burgos, where his corps would have effected a junction with that of Junot. Nothing, therefore, could be more visionary than the prospect of defeating Soult, while nothing could be more imminent than the

danger which the British were certain to incur in the attempt of bringing him to action. Indeed it was to the Spanish General alone that the British army was indebted for its safety. Had Romana not communicated the information that the enemy, under Napoleon, were in full march from Madrid, the advance on Carrion and Saldanha would have taken place, and the retreat of the army would, in all probability, have been cut off. As it was, Sir John Moore was barely able to extricate himself from the danger he had so imprudently courted, by a rapid and precipitate movement. But the very letters of the General afford abundant proof, that, even in his own opinion, the advance on Saldanha could be productive of no beneficial result. Why then was it undertaken? Why was a gallant army thus ingloriously perilled, and subsequently compelled to seek safety in one of the most calamitous retreats of which history bears record? *Not* with the hope of animating and invigorating the spirit of the Spanish nation, because that spirit was believed by Sir John Moore to have been utterly broken and subdued, but because it was considered "*necessary to risk the army, to convince the people of England, as well as*

CHAP. I. 1809. January. *the rest of Europe, that the Spaniards had neither the power nor the inclination to make any efforts for themselves!"*

Such was the object, for the attainment of which alone, the misfortunes attendant on the retreat to Corunna were inflicted on the British army and nation. Thank God that object was not attained. Had it been so, history would have been deprived of one of its most memorable lessons, and the brightest records of British glory would have been excluded from her annals.

Having said thus much on the previous operations of the army, we would say little of the retreat. That it was conducted with unnecessary rapidity, and that to this circumstance is attributable the greater part of its concomitant misfortunes, are points, we believe, on which the great majority of military authorities are agreed. Had the information of the General, with regard to the country traversed by his army, been more accurate and extensive, he would have known that there was no road leading to Betanzos and Corunna, by which the enemy could at any season have advanced with rapidity sufficient to have endangered his communications. In

fact, the roads on the right and left of that occupied by the British, most difficult at any season, must, at the period in question, when covered with deep snow, and intersected by swollen torrents from the mountains, have been utterly impracticable. At all events, no measures were taken to ascertain whether these roads were occupied by detachments of the enemy or not. Sir John Moore relied only for safety on the celerity of his marches; no attempt was made to impede the progress of the pursuers, by destroying the bridges which led across the numerous ravines; the soldiers, worn by incessant privation and fatigue to the lowest pitch of exhaustion compatible with life, became utterly demoralized; and all the proud attributes of a British army, save that of innate and indefeasible courage, were unnecessarily sacrificed.

We feel it to be superfluous to enter on more detailed criticisms on the minuter features of the retreat. Whatever may have been the errors of Sir John Moore, it must be admitted that fortune also was against him. The elements were his opponents; and those most deeply conversant in warlike operations, will be the first to acknowledge how easily the wisest calcula-

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tions may be overthrown by the occurrence of contingencies which human prudence could neither foresee nor avert. During his retreat, Sir John Moore lost no trophy in fight. He led his army to their ships. He declined to sacrifice the honour of his country by proposing a convention. He closed a life of honourable and distinguished service on the field of battle; and his reward was the shout of victory which met his dying ear.

From the moment he entered Spain, Sir John Moore was surrounded by difficulties. He saw at once that the British Government were deceived with regard to the state of the peninsula. He was directed to co-operate with armies which seemed to melt at a breath, and retain nothing of material existence. He was thwarted in his schemes by those on whose opinion he had injudiciously been made dependent. He received no support from the authorities of the country. He felt it to be impossible to realize the expectations of the British Government and nation. His spirit, almost morbidly sensitive, shrank from the breath of censure which even blameless failure, for a time, might draw on his fair fame. Unfortunately, such feelings—the

feelings of a generous and proud soul—gathered force as the prospect darkened around him, and disposed his mind to despondency. Something perhaps he wanted of fitting confidence in his own great powers; something too of that elastic buoyancy of spirit, which danger and difficulty tend rather to stimulate than depress.

But enough. Such as Moore was, England is proud of him; and the moral perceptions of her people must indeed be blunted, when they shall cease to regard his memory with love and honour.

CHAPTER II.

OPERATIONS OF THE FRENCH ARMIES.

CHAP. II.

1809. January.

CORUNNA capitulated on the twentieth of January, and was immediately occupied by the French troops. A division of the army was detached against Ferrol, which, notwithstanding its extreme strength, was treacherously surrendered.

In these places the French became masters of an immense supply of arms, artillery, ammunition, and stores of all descriptions, which enabled them to overrun the remainder of the province. Soult was then ordered to advance into Portugal, leaving the corps of Ney to secure the subjugation of Gallicia. But it is necessary we should now turn our attention to the events passing in the interior of Spain.

The advance of the French armies had compelled the Supreme Junta to retire from Aranjuez to Talavera, and subsequently to Seville, in which city they assembled on the seventeenth of December. A strong edict was issued, pronouncing sentence of death against every officer or soldier who should fail immediately to rejoin his colours. All who harboured them were declared liable to confiscation of property; but amnesty was offered to those who, within fifteen days, should present themselves to the nearest authority, with the view of being forwarded to the army.

December. Dec. 17

This decree was not without effect. A considerable number of the fugitives, from the Spanish armies on the Ebro, were again collected under General Galluzo, on the south of the Tagus, who made dispositions for defending the four bridges, by which alone the river can be crossed from the side of Talavera. Of these communications, that of Almaraz is the most important. On the approach of Lefebvre's corps, Galluzo attempted to destroy the bridge, but without success; and the French, under a demonstration of crossing at Arzobisbo, effected their passage

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at Almaraz; and, taking the Spanish divisions, too much separated, in detail, drove them as far as Merida. There the progress of Lefebvre was arrested, by an order to march northward in pursuit of Sir John Moore. Galluzo, whose incapacity had already been sufficiently established, was superseded in command by Cuesta.

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Towards the close of January, the Estramaduran army, having greatly recruited its strength, was enabled to assume the offensive. It was posted with its van-guard on the left branch of the Alamonte, between Truxillo and Xaraicejo, about half a league to the south-west of the latter place. The French had pushed their advanced parties close to the Spanish army; but they were repulsed and driven beyond Miravete. Cuesta then took possession of the pass upon that mountain; and the French, not being in sufficient force to maintain their position on the left of the Tagus, crossed the river, and fell back on Talavera.

While these events were passing in Estramadura, the Duke del Infantado, with the wreck of the army of Castanos, augmented by the levies recently raised in Granada and Andalusia, advanced

from Cuenca, in hope of surprising a body of French cavalry at Aranjuez and Tarancon. Information of this movement no sooner reached Victor at Toledo, than he set out with his corps in search of Infantado and his army. The French directed their march on Ocana, and reached that town without gaining any intelligence relative to the object of their pursuit. But on the morning of the thirteenth, either by accident, or by some blunder of the guides, the French suddenly found themselves in front of a body of the Spanish army, under Venegas, which occupied the crest of a hill near the village of Ucles. The Spaniards were driven from their position by the bayonet, and fled in great disorder towards Alcazar. Here again fortune was against them. The division of General Ruffin had accidentally deviated from the line of march, and, unawares, had gained the rear of the enemy. The retreat of the fugitive Spaniards was thus cut off. The consequences were disastrous. Several thousands were made prisoners. The loss, in killed and wounded, was very great, and forty guns were captured by the enemy. The small remnant which escaped, throwing away their arms, dispersed in various directions. Had Latour

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Maubourg's division of cavalry, which had been in march from day-dawn, not been prevented by fatigue from following up the pursuit, the consequences would have been still more fatal.

The inhuman barbarity with which the prisoners, made in this unfortunate battle, were treated, merits record. These unhappy wretches were marched to Madrid. Many of them sank under their fatigue—others died of inanition. When they could proceed no farther, they were shot without mercy. The inhabitants of Ucles had taken no part in the action, yet their town was made the theatre of atrocities which humanity shrinks from relating. Plunder, murder, torture, and violation, were among the evils inflicted on this unhappy people.

Rocca.

Immediately after the defeat of Ucles, Victor, with his corps, entered the province of Cuenca; and, after some operations, terminating in no marked result, retired to Madrilejos and Consuegra, where his troops went into cantonments.

We now turn to the operations in Catalonia.

At this period, the events in that principality may rather be considered as an important episode, in the general progress of the war, than as

MAP OF
CATALONIA.
Great roads
Carriage roads
Mule roads
Seu d'Urgel
Talarn
Cardona
Esplugues
LERIDA
Cervera
Monistrol
Villa Franca
TORTOSA
Mouths of the Ebro
Figueras
Rosas
Rosas Gulf
Scale of English Miles.
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
PLAN OF GERONA.
GERONA
A. Hermitage
B. Fortress de S.t Clara
C. Fort Mont-joüy
D. ——— de Calvario
E. ——— de Constable
F. ——— de Reyna Anna
G. ——— de Capuchinos
H. ——— de S. Anton

influencing, in any very powerful degree, the general fate of the kingdom. Still, it cannot be denied, that its possession would have eminently contributed to the consolidation of the French power in Spain; and it is the opinion of a high authority, that, at the commencement of the war, Napoleon would have acted more wisely had the greater proportion of his forces been employed for the reduction of Catalonia. St. Cyr.

No part of Spain, perhaps, opposes so many obstacles to an invading army. Its general character is rugged and mountainous; the plains are of small extent; and it abounds in regularly fortified places of great strength. Catalonia, therefore, was geographically strong, and yet stronger in the courage, hardihood, and fine spirit of her population. The prospect of becoming a province of France was one most repugnant to the pride of the Catalans,—and they were prepared by every sacrifice to avert the advent of so dreaded a misfortune. That Napoleon contemplated the dismemberment of Catalonia from Spain there can be no doubt. Its acquisition would have been most favourable to the augmentation of the commerce and naval power of France in the Mediterranean. With this view,

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he forbade his generals in the principality, to correspond with Joseph or his ministers, though he deemed it prudent to refrain from any public annunciation of his design.

The efforts hitherto made for the reduction of Catalonia had signally failed. At the end of August the French only retained possession of Barcelona and Figueras. By the Marques Palacio new levies were organized with all possible rapidity. The leading Junta of the province had issued an ordinance, directing forty *tercios* or battalions of Miquelets to be embodied; and part of these were already in the field. Reinforcements had been received from Majorca, Minorca, and Granada; and these, with the four thousand troops which had recently arrived from Portugal, augmented the regular army in Catalonia to about twenty-eight thousand men, exclusive of the garrisons of Hostalrich, Rosas, and Gerona.

The chief object of the Catalans was to recover Barcelona; and the attention of Palacio was exclusively occupied with preparations for a siege. With this view he collected magazines at different points on the Llobregat; and, in order to secure their safety, he took up an in-

trenched position on a mountain in rear of San Boy. Duhesme, alarmed by these measures, determined on driving the army of Palacio from the Llobregat. With this purpose, on the night of the first of September, he marched out from Barcelona; and on the morning of the second commenced an attack on the line occupied by the enemy. A severe engagement ensued. The progress of the assailants was repeatedly checked by the courage of the Miquelets; but the camp of San Boy was carried, and three guns, with a considerable quantity of provisions, clothing, and other stores, fell into the hands of the French.

The Catalan army were far from being dispirited by this misfortune; and Palacio, having determined to proceed by blockade, took up a new position on the mountains in rear of St. Vicensa and Molino del Rey, which commanded the point of junction of the roads to Lerida and Tarragona. There are only two other principal *debouchés* from the plain of Barcelona. To guard these a division was encamped on the mountains in front of St. André. The other roads which traverse the high chain which extends from the Besos to the Llobregat, are im-

CHAP. II. passable for carriages; but, in order to guard them, posts were established at suitable distances along the ridge, and along the two rivers, to the points at which they disembogue into the sea.

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Palacio's head-quarters were at Villa Franca; and hopes were entertained that, by a general rising of the inhabitants, the garrison would be forced to surrender. Magnificent offers were made to Lecchi, governor of the city, to induce him to betray his trust—offers which that General rejected with honourable indignation. In the meanwhile, the danger of Duhesme was daily increasing. His force was weakened to such a degree, by frequent contests with the blockading army, that he could no longer venture on a sortie. A deficiency of provisions was already felt in the city, and the prospects of the garrison were becoming daily more cloudy and unhopeful.

Such was the situation of affairs in Catalonia, when a new force, under command of General Gouvion St. Cyr, entered the province. It amounted to about eighteen thousand men, chiefly drawn from the army in Italy, commanded by Eugene de Beauharnois. During

September, and the early part of October, this corps had assembled at Perpignan; but the requisite arrangements for its advance were so tardily completed, that the troops did not quit their cantonments till the beginning of November. November.

The first operation of St. Cyr was to invest the town of Rosas. Rosas stands at the lower extremity of a fine bay, about four leagues east of Figueras, where the plain of Ampourdan touches the skirts of the Pyrenees. The possession of this place was considered indispensable, because, while the fine anchorage which it commands was open to the British, it was nearly impossible to re-victual Barcelona by sea; and the route by land was obstructed by Gerona and Hostalrich, both of which places were held by the Spaniards. Nov. 6.

On the sixth, St. Cyr established his head-quarters at Figueras, where he formed a junction with the corps of Reille. To this General the conduct of the siege was committed, and, uniting the Italian division of General Pino to his own, Reille took up a position near the town. On the day following, the French took possession of the heights which encompass the whole bay;

CHAP. II. and the troops and peasants from the neighbouring villages were driven into the town.

1808. November. The works of Rosas were in a feeble and dilapidated condition. The injuries sustained in the former siege had been but imperfectly repaired. Yet the garrison were resolute, and animated with the determination of firm and unshrinking resistance. A small British squadron was in the bay. It consisted of the Excellent of fifty guns, and the Lucifer and Meteor bomb-vessels. In order to assist the defence, a small body of marines was sent into Fort Trinidad; and the remainder, with fifty seamen, were thrown into the citadel.

Reille had expected to carry Rosas by a sudden attack; but this hope soon vanished. Preparations were then made for a regular siege. The heavy artillery was brought up, though not without some difficulty from the state of the weather and the roads. General Souham's division was posted between Figueras and the river Fluvia, to watch the movements of the enemy on the side of Gerona. General Chabot was moved to Espolla Rabos, with the view of covering the rear of the besieging force, and keeping in check the hostile population.

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On the sixteenth, an attempt was made on Fort Trinidad. It failed. The enemy, after a severe struggle to gain possession of the gates, were driven back. The progress of the besiegers was slow—for they appear to have been unprepared for the vigorous resistance which met them at every step of their advance. But time pressed. St. Cyr was aware that Barcelona, unless speedily succoured, must fall; and it became necessary that the operations should be pushed on with the greatest speed. The town was attacked on the night of the twenty-seventh. It was defended by five hundred men, who opposed the most resolute resistance to the assailants. These, however, were at length overpowered; and, of the whole number, fifty only succeeded in effecting their escape into the citadel.

November

Nov. 27.

The capture of the town was of material advantage to the besiegers. A breaching-battery was immediately established in front of a bastion formerly injured by the explosion of a magazine. Another was erected on the shore, by which the communication between the ships and the citadel was cut off.

Before the battery opened fire on the citadel,

CHAP. II. a summons was sent in by General Reille. The
1808. garrison, however, refused to surrender; and
November. the enemy continued to push on their operations. Fort Trinidad had already been breached; and the communication with the citadel was cut off.

At this juncture, Lord Cochrane arrived in the Imperieuse. With eighty seamen and marines he threw himself into the fort, and revived the sinking spirits of the garrison. On the
Nov. 30. thirtieth, General Sanson, commanding the French engineers, pronounced the breach practicable; and at night it was directed to be stormed. The attack was made, and failed. Lord Cochrane had formed a rampart, within the breach, of palisadoes and barrels filled with sand and rubbish, which the assailants found it impossible to surmount.

In the meanwhile, the situation of General Souham had been one of alarm. Had the Spaniards advanced in force against him, the siege must inevitably have been raised. But they wanted cavalry; energy and promptitude were not the characteristics of their leaders; the opportunity of effective action was suffered to escape; and Souham, though subjected to frequent

annoyance from the Miquelets, was successful in maintaining his ground. CHAP. II. 1808.

On the fifth of December, the citadel, having an open breach and being no longer tenable, consented to surrender; and the garrison, consisting of about two thousand men, were marched into France as prisoners of war. Sixteen bronze cannon were taken in the place. It then became apparent to Lord Cochrane that further resistance in the fort was impossible. He accordingly withdrew his men, blew up the magazine, burned the buildings, and quitted the Bay of Rosas with the squadron. December.

On the day after the capitulation, the French army commenced its march. On the eighth, the whole force, destined for the relief of Barcelona, was collected on the Fluvia. It amounted to fifteen thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse; the division of Reille being ordered to remain in the Ampourdan, holding Figueras and Rosas, and guarding the communications of the army. Dec. 8.

The numerical strength of the French was apparently inadequate to the object it was intended to effect. The Spanish army in Catalonia

CHAP. II. 1808. December.

mustered upwards of thirty thousand; and had General Vives, by whom the Marques de Palacio had been superseded in command, concentrated his forces for one decisive effort, there can be little doubt that the projects of the French General would have been defeated. But St. Cyr calculated on the imbecility of his adversary, and, unfortunately, was not deceived in his computation.

The march of the French army to Barcelona was one of great difficulty and danger. In case of defeat, retreat was impossible; for it was necessary to pass over mountains covered with snow, through long and dangerous defiles; and the swarms of armed peasants which occupied the heights, though dispersed with facility by the advancing army, again united, like the waves of the sea when furrowed by the keel of a ship, and closed up all avenue of escape.

The road by the coast had been broken up; and the other, commanded by the Fort of Hostalrich, was not practicable for artillery. At La Bisbal, therefore, St. Cyr found it necessary to send back his artillery to Figueras; and, issuing four days provisions, and fifty cartridges, to each

soldier, with one hundred and fifty thousand cartridges carried on mules, the army continued their march on Barcelona. CHAP. I 1808. Decembe

Don Juan Claros, with a body of Miquelets and Somatenes, had taken up a strong position at Col de la Grange, in order to oppose their march. From this he was driven by Pino's division; and the army proceeded to Val de Aro, without encountering other danger than that of receiving a few shots from the English ships, where the road near Palamos passes close to the shore.

On the thirteenth, the French halted at Vidreras. By his manœuvres, St. Cyr had endeavoured to propagate the belief that his object was Gerona. Having now passed that city, the deception could continue no longer; yet he adopted every means of creating doubt as to the route he intended to follow, aware that every hour of delay, in the concentration of the hostile forces, was an important advantage. Dec. 13.

On the fourteenth, St. Cyr took post in the neighbourhood of Hostalrich. Here, in order to avoid the fort, endeavours were made to find a path across the mountains, which were at length successful. The march was con- Dec. 14.

1808. December.

tinued on the fifteenth, but not without annoyance from the garrison of Hostalrich, which, having discovered the vicinity of the enemy, came out and annoyed their rear. No sooner had these assailants been repulsed, than the neighbouring heights were observed to be covered with Somatenes, who kept up a continued fire on the flanks of the advancing column. Observing that it did not halt, they became more bold, and approached nearer to the line of march. The French loss during the day amounted to two hundred men.

In the evening, the troops, harassed and tired, arrived at Torderas. St. Cyr determined on pushing on through the defile of Treinta-pasos, in expectation of encountering the Spanish army on the following morning. The road was broken up and obstructed by *abattis;* but this strong and defensible defile, about two leagues in extent, was passed without opposition, and the army bivouacked on a plain, about a league in rear of Llinas.

While the French were engaged before Rosas, General Vives had been engrossed with preparations for the siege of Barcelona. He had taken none of the ordinary means for ob-

taining prompt knowledge of the enemy's move- CHAP. II.
ments. He knew nothing of their strength or of 1808.
their plans. He had neglected to exert the December.
means in his power of opposing their progress. He suffered repeated opportunities to escape him of striking a signal blow,—of not only defeating, but utterly annihilating the French army. He knew nothing of the points to be occupied in the country traversed by the enemy. He was surrounded by men ignorant as their leader of all military knowledge; and, secure in the belief that the French could not advance without first becoming masters of Gerona, he remained in a state of deplorable inaction, till the opportunity of overpowering the enemy had passed.

At length, intelligence was received that St. Cyr, having sent back his artillery, was continuing his march, and doubt could no longer be entertained that Barcelona was his object. Instead of instantly marching with his whole force, Reding, with about four thousand men, was sent to oppose his progress. Succeeding advices confirmed the intelligence of the enemy's motions. A council of war was held, and Vives set forward with five thousand to join Reding,

CHAP. II. 1808. December. whom he overtook at Granollers. From that place he set out at midnight, when the French had just passed the defile of Treinta-pasos.

It was the intention of Vives to occupy a position between Llinas and Villalba; but, owing to delays, the head of the column had only reached Cardedeu by six in the morning, when the fires of the enemy's bivouack were discerned. Vives continued his march; but, at eight o'clock, the advanced-guard gave information that the French were already formed in column.

Vives immediately ranged his army, fatigued and dispirited by a long night march, in order of battle. The position chosen was a range of flat eminences; the right was protected by a rugged and precipitous mountain covered with Miquelets, the centre by a deep and difficult ravine, and the left by a thick wood; twelve pieces of artillery were distributed along the line.

St. Cyr determined on immediate attack. The Marques de Lazan was advancing on his rear, and the delay even of an hour might prove fatal. Without artillery, he was exposed to every disadvantage; and he felt aware that

it was only by a combination of skill, promptitude, and audacity, that he could surmount the perils by which he was environed.

The army was directed to advance in column, in order, by one powerful and united effort, to break the line of their opponents; and it was the positive order of the General, that not even a battalion should be deployed. General Pino's division led the column, exposed, during its advance, to the fire of the Spanish artillery. In direct disobedience of the orders of his General, Pino deployed his leading brigade, which advanced against the left of Reding's division, and, after a warm struggle, was compelled to give ground.

This circumstance occasioned considerable derangement in the plans of the French General. He directed Souham's division to attack the right of Reding, and turn it. Pino was ordered to advance with his remaining brigade in column, according to his original instructions. Two battalions were directed to make a false attack on the left, in order to distract the attention of the enemy from the other movements.

These arrangements were crowned with com-

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plete success. The Spanish line was at once broken; panic spread among the troops, and they fled in all directions, relinquishing their guns and ammunition without further struggle. In this action, the French made two thousand prisoners, of whom eight hundred were wounded. The killed were about four hundred. The loss of the French amounted to six hundred in killed and wounded.

The triumph, thus easily achieved over his ignorant and vacillating opponent, at once extricated St. Cyr from all his difficulties. Without waiting to collect prisoners, or to engage Lazan, whose approach might be hourly expected, he continued his march to Barcelona. There was nothing in that quarter to oppose him. One column alone of the Spanish army had been enabled to quit the field unbroken. This was joined by Reding, who led it across the Llobregat to Molino del Rey. Vives lost his horse; and, escaping on foot across the mountains, reached Mataro, where he sought safety on shipboard. In a few days he re-appeared at Tarragona.

While these events were in progress, a sally had been made by Duhesme against the besieg-

ing force under Caldaques. It was bravely repulsed. But, on learning the result of the battle, Caldaques withdrew behind the Llobregat, relinquishing the large magazines which Vives had, with so much unfortunate industry, been long occupied in collecting.

On the seventeenth, St. Cyr entered Barcelona. On the twentieth, he took up a position Dec. 20.
on the left of the Llobregat, fronting that of the Spaniards. The latter were encamped on the right bank of the river; their centre ranged along the heights in rear of San Vicensa, their left was at Pelleja, and their right extended towards the little village of Llors. The headquarters of St. Cyr were at San Felici, his left at Cornella, his right at Molino del Rey.

The position of the Spanish army was strong; but, in order to prevent their being reinforced by the arrival of Lazan, St. Cyr determined to attack them. Their chief attention had been directed to the works defending the bridge at Molino del Rey; but, at daybreak on the twenty-first, the two divisions of Souham and Pino Dec. 21.
passed the river simultaneously, by the fords of San Felici, and San Juan d'Espi; while Chabran

CHAP. II. 1808. December. kept up a warm cannonade on the bridge, and excited the enemy's alarm in that quarter. The Spaniards were attacked with vehemence by Pino and Souham. Chabot, with three battalions, likewise passed the ford, and took up a position on the left of Pino, threatening the right of the Spanish army. To counteract this manœuvre, Reding extended his line; and, by so doing, weakened it. The consequence was, that the right was driven back behind the centre, and the centre, in its turn, behind the left. All then became confusion. The army fled, without order, towards the bridge; but in that quarter the retreat to Villa Franca was cut off by Chabot, and that to Martorell by Chabran, who had succeeded in crossing a detachment at a ford. Had Chabran, at that moment, forced the passage of the bridge, all retreat for the Spaniards would have been cut off. But that General did not move till too late, though frequently urged to do so by General Rey.

The country, being rugged, woody, and full of ravines, was unfavourable for cavalry, and contributed to the escape of the fugitives. Not more than from one thousand to twelve hundred prisoners were taken. Among these, was Cal-

daques, who, during the progress of the operations, had been uniformly distinguished by zeal and talent.

The rout of the Spaniards was complete. About fifteen thousand were afterwards enabled to collect in Tarragona; but many continued their flight to the Ebro. All the artillery, consisting of about fifty pieces, was taken; and large stores of ammunition were found by the enemy in Villa Franca.

After this important victory, St. Cyr pushed on his cavalry to the walls of Tarragona. That city had scarcely twenty guns on the ramparts, and disorder and consternation reigned in its population. Vives, on his arrival there, was deprived of his command, and thrown into a dungeon. It was with difficulty that he escaped massacre. Some accused him of treason, others of imbecility; crimes undoubtedly of very different magnitude and atrocity, yet nearly certain, in such a case, to encounter the same recompense.

Reding, by the almost unanimous voice of the soldiers and the people, was appointed successor to the unfortunate Vives. This measure tended greatly to restore that confidence which

CHAP. II. 1808. December. the recent disasters had contributed to overthrow. Efficacious measures were taken to re-organize the scattered troops. A reinforcement of three battalions was received from Grenada and Majorca; supplies were sent from Valencia; men came in from all quarters; and, before the middle of January, the force collected in Tarragona wore a formidable aspect.

CHAPTER III.

SECOND SIEGE OF ZARAGOZA.

CHAP. III. 1808. December.

THE sufferings of the gallant Zaragozans, during the former siege, had not subdued the spirit of heroic devotion by which they had been animated. Another trial awaited them, not less memorable and glorious, though less fortunate in its result.

After the defeat of Tudela, Palafox retired to Zaragoza, to make preparations for a second siege. He was not present in the action. The intelligence of its issue came upon him like a thunderbolt; and the refusal of Castanos to throw his troops into Zaragoza, instead of retreating on Madrid, put an end to those feelings of confidence and frankness which had hitherto existed between the Generals.

CHAP. III. 1808. December. The multiplied disasters of the Spanish armies, however, so far from shaking the resolution of Palafox or the Zaragozans, appear only to have stimulated them to redoubled exertions in the service of their country. Proclamations were issued, commanding all women, old men, and children, to quit the city. Every inhabitant was imperatively called upon to make sacrifice, if necessary, of his life and property in the common cause; and the whole population were required, by their personal exertions, to contribute to the completion of the fortifications of the city.

The approach of the enemy cut short the preparations for defence. Neither women nor children left the place. Even these refused to seek safety at a distance from their fathers and husbands, and preferred participating in the danger and the glory which awaited them in Zaragoza, to wandering unprotected, through a troubled and a suffering country.

During the former siege, the defenders had been embarrassed by the presence of French residents in the city. These had been strictly guarded, with the double object of preventing any intercourse between them and the besiegers,

and of protecting them against the fatal effects of popular suspicion, to which, without such precaution, it is more than probable they would have fallen victims. In order to prevent the repetition of such danger and inconvenience, Palafox determined that these unfortunate persons should be removed from the city to other places of confinement. This was done, notwithstanding the hostility of the populace, though not until Palafox had issued a proclamation appealing to Spanish honour and humanity, and imploring the gallant Zaragozans not to stain the sacred cause of liberty and justice by the foul murder of these defenceless victims.

The aid of superstition was not wanting to strengthen the confidence of the Zaragozans. They relied on the miraculous protection of Our Lady of the Pillar, who had made their favoured city the seat of her peculiar worship. The successful termination of the former siege had given strength to their belief in the beneficent regards of the patron saint. Omens too had been observed in the sky. Approaching victory had been prefigured by unwonted conformations of the clouds; and celestial voices were heard in the elements offering divine promise of glory and protection.

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Fortunately, the Zaragozans were not induced, by their belief in these flattering portents, to disregard any of the human means of safety in their power. A continued line of exterior defensive works had been planned and executed, as far as time and circumstances permitted. Yet this, imperfect as it was, added little to the real strength of the city; and, in forming a just estimate of the zeal and courage of the defenders, Zaragoza should almost be considered as an unfortified town. The walls, originally built rather for the purpose of civic impost than defence, were surmounted by one hundred and fifty pieces of cannon. Large stores of provisions had been formed. Arms and ammunition were in abundance; and the town contained upwards of twenty thousand regular troops, besides fifteen thousand armed peasants.

All the houses, within seven hundred toises of the place, were demolished, and the materials employed to strengthen the fortifications. The trees round the city were cut down. The greatest activity reigned on all hands:—the women were employed in making clothes for the soldiers,—the monks made cartridges; and all those

not employed in labouring at the works, practised the use of arms.

Measures were likewise taken for the defence of the city, in case the enemy, which was scarcely to be doubted, should effect an entrance. Traverses were cut across the streets. The doors and windows on the ground-floor were strongly barricaded. Communications were made between the houses; and parapets were constructed on the roofs. Every householder had in his dwelling an ample store of provisions, to enable him to continue his resistance when the enemy should gain possession of the streets. Thus prepared, the Zaragozans awaited the approach of the besiegers. December.

In the meanwhile, the corps of Marshal Moncey, which had been ordered to blockade the city, remained at Alagon, collecting materials, and awaiting the arrival of his heavy artillery from Pamplona. On the nineteenth of December it was joined by the corps of Mortier, and on the twentieth the united army appeared before Zaragoza. It consisted of about thirty-five thousand infantry, and was accompanied by a battering train of sixty pieces. A corps of Dec. 20.

CHAP. III. cavalry was stationed at Fuentes, to keep the surrounding country in subjection.

1808. December. The city was approached on both sides of the Ebro. Gazan's division, having passed the river at Tauste, marched, by the road of Castejon, to Cuera and Villa Nuevo. That of Suchet took post on the right of the Ebro, near a convent about a league distant from Zaragoza, after driving in the Spanish outposts.

During the night, the enemy erected a battery, which commanded the Torrero, and, in the morning, opened fire on the fort. Unfortunately, a quantity of ammunition was blown up, by the bursting of a shell, which occasioned considerable disorder in the garrison. The French took advantage of this. A column crossed the canal by an aqueduct, of which, on the evening before, they had become masters, and entering the fort by the gorge, succeeded in maintaining the place against the efforts of the garrison. At the same time, a brigade of Morlot's division advanced up the ravine of the Huerba, and, passing the canal under the aqueduct on which it crosses that river, gained possession of a work commanding the sluices of the canal. Two guns

were taken in this work. Three guns and one hundred prisoners in the fort. General St. Marc succeeded in withdrawing the rest of the garrison.

On the twenty-second, General Gazan advanced against the suburb, on the left of the river. He was encountered by about four thousand of the garrison, posted in the woods and gardens, from which, after a warm contest, he succeeded in dislodging them. Gazan then attempted to carry the suburb by a *coup-de-main*. In this he failed. Repulsed in all his efforts, after a long and fruitless contention, he, at length, withdrew his troops, pursued by the garrison, and with the loss of near one thousand men. The chief loss of the besieged consisted of a corps of Swiss, almost all of whom were killed or taken prisoners in a large building considerably in advance of the suburb.

Cavallero.

For several days all was quiet. The enemy were now aware that it was necessary to make a regular investment of the place; and the works, in all quarters, were pushed on with vigour. The besieged on their part endeavoured by incessant labour to complete the works of defence;

CHAP. III. batteries, were constructed to enfilade the principal approaches, the magazines were rendered bomb-proof, every outlet was palisaded and traversed; and, thus prepared, they waited with calm fortitude for the approaching struggle.

1808. December.

Dec. 30. On the thirtieth, Marshal Moncey addressed a letter to Palafox, summoning him to surrender the city, now entirely invested, and to spare the effusion of blood which must necessarily follow any further attempt at hopeless resistance. Moncey likewise informed him that Madrid had fallen; and that Napoleon, at the head of a great army, was then in the act of chasing the English to their ships.

To this Palafox replied, that if Madrid had fallen, Madrid had been *sold*. The works of Zaragoza were yet entire; but, were they levelled with the ground, the people and the garrison would rather be buried in the ruins of their city, than disgraced by surrender.

In the meanwhile, General Gazan succeeded in effecting the blockade of the suburb. One of his brigades extended on the right of the Zuera road, the other on the left to the bridge over the Gallego, on the road to Barcelona. On the

right bank, Suchet held the ground comprised between the high* Ebro and the valley of the Huerba. Morlot's division occupied the valley. That of Meusnier was encamped on the heights of Torrero; and the arc was continued to the low Ebro, by the division of Grandjean, whose right, by means of a bridge of boats, was in communication with Gazan.

On the twenty-ninth, the trenches were regularly opened against three points, viz. the Chateau of the Inquisition on the left, the bridge of the Huerba in the centre, and the convent of St. Joseph on the right. The last of these was the principal object of the enemy, because the works in rear were destitute of a rampart, and it was intended to connect the attack with a simultaneous attempt to gain possession of the suburb. Dec. 29.

The garrison, however, were not idle. The communication between the Convent and the city could not be interrupted; and the garrison of the former, being daily relieved, made frequent sallies, by which the progress of the

* To unmilitary readers it may be necessary to explain, that the *high Ebro* means the portion of the river above the city; the *low Ebro*, that below it.

CHAP. III. besiegers was materially retarded. On the thirty-first, a general sortie, supported by the whole guns of the place, was made against the enemy's line. Though gallantly supported, it was unattended by any successful result. The repeated attacks of the garrison were repulsed; and, baffled in their efforts, they again entered the city. The loss on both sides was nearly equal.

1808. December.

1809. Jan. 2. On the second of January, Moncey was superseded by Marshal Junot in the command of the besieging army. The latter was the bearer of an order to Mortier, to move on Calatayud with Suchet's division, in order to keep open the communication with Madrid. This arrangement occasioned a material diminution of the besieging force, but no cessation of hostile operation. The works against the Convent of St. Joseph went on, and between the third and sixth of January the second parallel was completed.

Jan. 10. Till the tenth no action took place; but on that day no less than eight batteries had been constructed, and a tremendous fire from thirty guns was opened on the Convent. It was soon rendered untenable. But, amid the ruins, the gunners, covered by bags of wool, still continued to

exercise their vocation, and fired on the enemy, till the walls were nearly levelled with the ground. Even then the post was not relinquished without a gallant effort. At midnight a sortie was made against one of the batteries, in ignorance that two guns had been planted for its protection. The intention of the brave assailants was thus defeated; and, having suffered heavy loss from a murderous fire, both in front and flank, they again retreated to the city. January.

Even in the dilapidated condition of the Convent, it was not till the evening of the next day that the enemy attempted to carry it by assault. At the same time a party, having turned the Convent, succeeded, by means of a wooden bridge which the besieged had omitted to destroy, in effecting an entrance; and thus did the French at length become masters of a heap of ruins, and of about an hundred gallant men by whom they were defended. Jan. 11.

No sooner were the enemy in possession of St. Joseph, than they employed themselves in repairing the works, and completing the communication between the second and third parallels, the latter of which they established on the right and left of the Convent. The garrison on

CHAP. III. 1809. January. that side were now compelled to remain within their walls; for the besiegers were secured against their efforts by the double obstacle of a river and an escarpment eight feet high.

Jan. 15. On the fifteenth, a second parallel was opened against the town; and batteries were commenced in it, to enfilade the defences of the Augustine and Capuchin Convents, and that of Sta. Engracia. Yet neither the loss of their outworks, nor a tremendous bombardment, which the French kept up for several days, had the effect of diminishing the ardour of the inhabitants. The Zaragozans were not only actuated by that active and living energy which stimulates to deeds of high enterprize, but they possessed, likewise, that calm and passive fortitude, that buoyant upbearing of the spirit, which suffering cannot depress, nor misfortune overthrow.

But their cup was not yet full. The inhabitants of the part of the city most injured by the bombardment, were driven into the other quarters, where many of them took up their abode in cellars, which afforded comparative security from the shells. The consequence was, that these dark and miserable receptacles became the focus of infectious fever. The disease spread rapidly

among a crowded and redundant population. Thus did death, on all hands, present itself to the unshrinking Zaragozans; and the greater part preferred exposing themselves on the ramparts, to breathing the infected air which pervaded the dark and noisome retreats in which they had sought refuge.

From the seventeenth to the twenty-first, the besiegers were occupied in the construction of new batteries to overcome the defences of the garrison; and the third parallel was extended to command two sides of the Convent of Sta. Engracia. In these circumstances, a sortie was made, in the hope of spiking the enemy's artillery. The fire of a battery of four mortars was found peculiarly annoying; and eighty men, commanded by Don Mariano Galindo, volunteered to attack it. They boldly precipitated themselves on the guard of the third parallel, put them to the sword, and succeeded in entering the battery. At the same moment the enemy's reserve came up. There was no retreat; all perished except the officers and a few wounded soldiers, who were made prisoners.

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The movements of the numerous bodies of armed peasantry, in the surrounding country,

CHAP. III. 1809. January. occasioned great inconvenience to the besiegers. Bands were formed on all hands; which, though unable to resist the attack of disciplined troops, yet were sufficiently formidable to require perpetual vigilance, and numerous enough to narrow the supplies of the besieging army, in a very important degree. On the left of the Ebro, the Marques de Lazan and Don Francisco Palafox were advancing to the relief of the city. They occupied the country between Villa Franca, Licinia, and Zuera; and pushed forward parties to Caparoso to intercept the convoys, and surround the division of Gazan.

About this time, Napoleon, dissatisfied with the slow progress of the siege, sent Marshal Lannes to assume the command. This officer directed Mortier, with his division, to leave Calatayud, and to act on the left of the Ebro. Mortier attacked the force of Francisco Palafox, and succeeded in dispersing it with very considerable loss. Lannes, in order to depress the hopes of the garrison of external assistance, addressed a letter to Palafox, communicating this circumstance, and all the other disasters which had befallen the Spanish armies. But the mortifying intelligence thus conveyed did not shake the

firmness of the undaunted leader. He rejected all compromise, and continued, with undiminished vigour, to oppose every possible obstacle to the progress of the enemy. CHAP. III. 1809. January.

All the outworks of the place had now fallen, except the castle of the Inquisition, which had been subjected to no serious attack. The newly raised works of the *Enceinte* had been battered by fifty-five guns; and, on the twenty-seventh, three breaches were declared practicable. One was near an oil-mill, which stood without the walls of the place, though but little removed from them. The second was to the left of this, between the Convent of St. Joseph and the town. The third was in the Convent of Sta. Engracia. All these were attacked. At mid-day, a column issued from the oil-mill, which had been occupied over-night, and, rapidly clearing the short distance which divided it from the walls, entered the breach, unbroken by the heavy fire to which they were exposed, and the explosion of two *Fougasses*. Having reached the summit, the assailants found an interior retrenchment armed with two guns, which the garrison had unexpectedly erected to obstruct their progress. They attempted, without success, to surmount this ob- Jan. 27.

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stacle, under a shower of grape, musquetry, and grenades. Forced to retire, the besiegers took advantage of the cover afforded by the exploded *Fougasses* to effect a lodgment on the breach.

The breach in face of St. Joseph presented fewer obstacles to be overcome. The column of attack having reached the summit, succeeded in occupying the opposite house, which the artillery in firing on the wall had laid open. The houses adjoining were then gained; and on the right of the breach they found a gate which afforded another entrance into the town. Here, however, their progress was arrested by a battery of the enemy, commanding a court which it was necessary to pass. On the left a double *Caponnier*, which the garrison had used to communicate with St. Joseph's, was repaired and lengthened to the breach.

The attack on Sta. Engracia was yet more successful. After a severe struggle the assailants gained the breach of the Convent, but in attempting to advance further, they met a spirited repulse. Another effort was made, which terminated in their gaining possession of the building. The curtain leading from Sta. Engracia to the bridge of the Huerba was then enfiladed, and,

taking the *tête-de-pont* in reverse, the enemy at once became masters of that important post. Here they were joined by fresh troops, and, pushing on within the curtain to the Convent of Mount Carmel, made an effort to gain possession of it, which met with a repulse. From thence they advanced rapidly to the Capuchin Convent, putting forty artillery men, who constituted the whole of its garrison, to the sword. The assailants then established themselves along the rampart in order to guard the posts they had been successful in acquiring.

A dreadful fire was soon opened on the besiegers from the houses commanding the rampart. From this they in vain sought shelter among the ruins of the half-demolished walls. Retreat became necessary, and the column was directed to retire on the Puerta del Carmen. The garrison, by a bold attack, regained possession of the Capuchin Convent; but two battalions coming up to reinforce the assailants, it was again taken, and maintained, though at a dear price, by the enemy.

During the night a strong but unsuccessful effort was made by the besieged to regain possession of the Convents of Sta. Engracia and the

CHAP. III. 1809. January. Capuchins. The results of these operations were the loss to the besieged of fifteen guns and two hundred prisoners, and that the enemy gained footing in the city at two different points. The loss in killed and wounded, by the French accounts, was nearly equal on both sides. It amounted to about six hundred.

The misfortunes of the Zaragozans were hourly accumulating. The Fever demon stalked through the city like a destroying angel, conquering and to conquer. The number of dead per day amounted to three hundred and fifty, without including those who fell the more immediate victims of war. The hospitals were too small to contain the host of patients, and the necessary medicines were exhausted. The burying grounds were choked with corpses; and large pits were dug in the streets, into which the dead were tossed indiscriminately. Heaps of bloated and putrescent bodies were piled before the churches, which were often struck by the shells; and the maimed and ghastly carcasses lay dispersed along the streets, a frightful spectacle of horror. Even under such evils the courage of the Zaragozans did not quail.

Cavallero.

The city was now open to the invaders, and

the war as formerly was carried on in the streets and houses. Not one inch of ground was yielded by the besieged without a struggle; and when finally driven from a building, they frequently, by a desperate offensive effort, recovered it; and an equal resistance had again to be encountered by the assailants. Traverses were cut around the portions of the city occupied by the enemy; and at the sound of the tocsin, the garrison were always ready to rush to any quarter where hostilities had commenced.

1809. January.

Palafox, however, did not limit his efforts to obstructing the progress of the enemy; he made vigorous efforts to recover the ground already lost, and drive the assailants from their stations. Two attempts were made to regain the Convent of the Capuchins. Both failed. A third more powerful effort was made on the thirty-first. A breach was effected during the day, and at night the assault took place. The besieged advanced with signal resolution towards the breach, but owing to a ditch sunk by the enemy it was found impossible to mount it. They then threw themselves on the door of the church, and endeavoured to force it. In spite of the fire from

Jan. 31.

CHAP. III. 1809. January. the windows, and the grenades showered from the steeple, they maintained their ground, forced the door; but an epaulment within obstructed their progress; and fresh troops being brought up by the enemy, the project was at length renounced.

Priests and women bore part in these operations. The former carried munitions, and gave ghostly succour to the dying, animating the soldiers at once by their words and their example. The latter bore refreshments to their sons, or husbands, or fathers; and sometimes when one of those dear relatives fell by their side, they seized his arms, determined to revenge his death or perish in the same glorious cause. In truth the contest lay between skill and enthusiasm; enthusiasm mingled indeed with superstition of the grossest character, yet active, firm, vigorous, and unshrinking; skill exerted in a struggle as unjust and degrading, as any by which the pages of history are contaminated and defaced.

Feb. 1. Notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the garrison, the French gained ground. The first of February was marked by the capture of the

Convents of St. Augustin and St. Monica. Having been repelled in assaulting the breaches, the assailants sprung a mine, and by that means effected an entrance, and took in reverse the works erected for their defence. A deadly struggle took place in the church. Every chapel, every column, every altar, became a point of defence,—the pavement was strewed with blood, and the aisles and nave of the church were covered with the dead. During this terrific conflict, the roof, shattered by bombs, fell in. Those who escaped, renewed the contest on the bodies of the dead and dying. The French were at length successful, and advancing on the Rua Quemada, gained possession of several houses. From these, however, they were eventually compelled to retreat.

At the same time, an attack was made on the houses near Sta. Engracia. Two mines, one on the left, the other on the right, of the Convent, were sprung by the besiegers; after which, two columns of Polish infantry succeeded in gaining possession of the ruins caused by the explosion. The loss of the besiegers was very considerable, and General Lacoste, commandant of engineers, was killed. He was an officer of

CHAP. III. great professional eminence, and untarnished character.

1809. February. During four days the besiegers were employed in constructing three galleries to cross the Rua Quemada. Two of these failed. By means of the third they succeeded in establishing themselves in the ruins of a house which formed an angle of the Cozo, and of the Rua del Medio. A building, called the Escuelas Pias, commanded several traverses, made for the defence of the Cozo. Aware of the importance of this post, the assailants made several unsuccessful efforts to gain possession of it. They then attempted the adjoining houses; but in this also they failed. The system of blowing up the houses, now adopted, was favourable to the besieged; for the enemy, who established themselves on the ruins, were thus exposed to the fire of the surrounding buildings. In the meanwhile, the continual succession of formidable and unforeseen obstacles, which presented themselves to the French soldiers, had considerably damped their ardour; while the spirits of the besieged, who had to contend against famine, fever, and the French army, were yet unbroken.

The inner town is encircled by the Cozo,

which reaches at both extremities to the river; and the French, in order to connect their operations with those of Gazan, on the left of the Ebro, determined, at all risks, to gain possession of it. The Convent of St. Francisco, therefore, became their immediate object. A mine was exploded, which brought down part of the building; and a severe contest ensued, which lasted for two days. The Spaniards were at length driven out by the bayonet—the superiority of physical, as well as of numerical strength, being on the side of the assailants.

From the tower of this building, the French now commanded the street, for a musket-shot on either side. There, however, their progress was for a time arrested. The buildings in the Cozo were large and massive; and from their construction with roofs of arched masonry, nearly incombustible. Experience had perfected the Zaragozans in their defensive warfare; and the contest was continued with, if possible, augmented pertinacity. Three days were the French sappers successfully opposed in their endeavours to cross the Cozo. The University was partially breached by the explosion of two small mines. The besiegers then endeavoured to

CHAP. III. 1809. February. carry the building by assault; but they were met by a fire so destructive as to compel them to retreat.

Hitherto the suburb on the left of the Ebro had been exempted from attack, since Gazan's failure on the first night of the investment. That officer, availing himself of some ambiguity in his orders, had declined to re-engage in active operations; nor was it till Lannes arrived, with authority to enforce his orders, that Gazan was induced to resume the offensive.

Feb. 7. On the seventh, the Convent of Jesus, on the left of the road to Lerida, was attacked. Trenches were opened against it; and twenty battering pieces having effected a breach, it was carried with little loss, the building not being considered by the besieged as of material importance. The enemy then succeeded in establishing a lodgment to the right and left.

Feb. 18. On the eighteenth, the suburb, after two unsuccessful efforts, was carried by assault. A tremendous fire from fifty guns soon laid open the way to the assailing columns. By mid-day a breach was effected in the Convent of St. Lazarus, commanding the bridge; and the defenders, after a strenuous resistance, were driven

from the building. All communication between the suburb and the city was now cut off; and the French, immediately advancing to the river, intercepted the retreat of about fifteen hundred men, who, enfeebled by disease and suffering, were made prisoners. The capture of St. Lazarus necessarily involved that of the suburb, which was without ammunition or provisions, yet many of its defenders continued to wage a fierce but hopeless war in the streets. Many crossed the bridge under a shower of bullets, and effected their escape to the city. Others succeeded in passing the river in boats. Altogether, the loss of the besieged amounted to about two thousand. The brave Baron de Versage, who commanded on the left bank of the Ebro, was killed.

The loss of the suburb laid open to the enemy the only part of the town which had hitherto been exempted from direct attack. The besiegers, imagining that the courage of the garrison had been abated by this irreparable misfortune, continued their operations with vigour. By means of mining, two enormous breaches were made in the University—both of which were attacked and carried; and the traverses of the

1809. February. Cozo were at length abandoned by the Spaniards. In the meantime, Palafox had been smitten with the dreadful disease, whose ravages had been more widely spread than even those of famine and the sword. This admirable and heroic leader, who, for above a month, had been unable to quit the vault where he lay stretched on a bed of suffering, at length saw the necessity of resigning the command.

Feb. 19. On the nineteenth, he transferred his authority to a Junta, of which Don Pedro Ric was appointed president. A council was immediately assembled to deliberate on the condition of the city, and the measures most proper to be adopted. At this meeting it was stated, by the General of cavalry, that only sixty-two horses remained, the rest having died of hunger. Of the infantry it appeared there were little more than two thousand eight hundred men fit for service. Ammunition was nearly exhausted; and should a shell penetrate the Inquisition, their only manufactory of powder would be destroyed. The fortifications were stated, by the chief engineer, to have been almost utterly demolished. There were neither men nor materials necessary for repairing them; and bags of

earth could no longer be formed from want of cloth. CHAP. III. 1809. February.

In order to ascertain the chances of external succour, the Duke de Villahermosa was sent to Palafox, to receive such information on the subject as he might be able to communicate. But fever was raging in his brain, and he could communicate nothing. His papers were examined; but these only tended to increase the conviction, that no relief could reasonably be expected from without.

With regard to the measures to be adopted, the Junta were divided in opinion. Twenty-six voted for capitulation; eight against it. The latter were averse to surrender, while even a possibility of succour remained. With proud gallantry of spirit the opinion of the minority was adopted by the Junta. A flag of truce was sent to the enemy, proposing a suspension of hostilities, with the view of ascertaining the situation of the Spanish armies; it being understood that should no immediate succour be at hand, the Junta would then treat for a surrender. This proposal was peremptorily declined by Marshal Lannes; and the bombardment recommenced.

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On the twentieth the garrison made a last and unsuccessful effort to recover two guns which the enemy had captured on the preceding day. Affairs were now desperate. The fifty guns which had been employed in the attack of the suburb, now opened fire on the city; and the streets in the neighbourhood of the quay were laid in ruins.

Thus situated, the Junta ordered measures to be taken to ascertain the sentiments of the people with regard to the situation of their city. Two-thirds of it were in ruins. Fire, famine, and slaughter had done their work; and from three to four hundred persons were daily dying of the pestilence. Under such circumstances the Junta declared they had fulfilled their oath of fidelity,—and that *Zaragoza was destroyed.* A flag of truce was despatched to the French head-quarters, followed by a deputation of the Junta, to arrange the terms of capitulation. Marshal Lannes was at first disposed to insist on unconditional surrender. The proposal was indignantly rejected by the deputies; and Ric declared, that rather than submit to it the Zaragozans would die beneath the ruins of their city. "I, and my companions," said this noble

patriot, " will return there, and defend what remains to us as best we may. We have yet arms and ammunition, and if these fail we have daggers. War is never without its chances; and should the Zaragozans be driven to despair, it yet remains to be proved who are to be victorious."

In this temper of the garrison, Lannes did not think it prudent to refuse granting terms. It was accordingly conceded that the troops should march out with the honours of war, that the heroic Palafox should be suffered to retire to any place where he might think proper to fix his residence, and that all persons, not included in the garrison, should be suffered to quit the city, in order to avoid the contagion.

On the twenty-first, the posts of the city were delivered up to the French, and thus terminated one of the most strenuous and extraordinary struggles of which history bears record. The resistance continued for fifty-two days with open trenches; twenty-nine of these were consumed by the enemy in effecting an entrance,—twenty-three in the war subsequently carried on in the streets and houses. By their own account the French threw above seventeen thousand bombs

Feb. 21.

CHAP. III. into the city, and expended above one hundred and sixty thousand pounds weight of powder. More than thirty thousand men and five hundred officers perished in the defence, exclusive of a vast number of women and children, who sank the mute and suffering victims of fire, famine, pestilence, and slaughter. The amount of loss sustained by the besiegers was studiously concealed,—that it was very great, cannot be doubted; and the contemplated operations on Lerida and Valencia, for which the army was destined, were in consequence given up.

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When the garrison quitted the city, only two thousand four hundred men were capable of bearing arms; the rest were in the hospitals. On the march to France, two hundred and seventy of these men, weakened by famine and disease, were found incapable of proceeding with the rapidity which their inhuman conductors considered necessary; they were butchered and left on the road, to serve as a spectacle and a warning to the succeeding divisions.

Among the prisoners, was Augustina Zaragoza, who had distinguished herself in the former siege. At the commencement, she had resumed her station by the Portillo gate. When

Palafox visited the battery, she pointed to the gun she had formerly served with so much effect, and exclaimed, "See, General, I am again with my old friend." Once, when her wounded husband lay bleeding at her feet, she discharged the cannon at the enemy, in order to avenge his fall. She frequently led the assaulting parties, and with sword in hand, and her cloak wrapped round her, mingled in the daily conflicts which took place in the streets. Though exposed, during the whole siege, to the most imminent danger, Augustina escaped without a wound. On the surrender of the city, she was too well known to escape notice, and was made prisoner. But she had already caught the contagion; and being taken to the hospital, she subsequently succeeded in effecting her escape.

The record of female heroism must be yet further extended. During the struggle, the women of Zaragoza shrank from no ordeal, however terrible. In the combat, where the fight was thickest,—on the ramparts, where the fire was most deadly,—in the hospitals,—in the dark and airless dens of pestilence, breathing a tainted and noisome atmosphere,—there were they found, these "meek-eyed women, without

CHAP. III. 1809. February. fear," soothing the dying, ministering to the suffering, and exhibiting a proud and memorable spectacle of fortitude and virtue.

The terms of the capitulation were shamefully violated by Marshal Lannes. Palafox was sent a prisoner into France; and the city became the scene of pillage and atrocity. The province, on the fall of Zaragoza, became comparatively tranquil. Fourteen thousand men, under Suchet, were left to maintain tranquillity; and the remainder of the besieging army, under Mortier, moved into Castile.

In the meanwhile, Europe rung with admiration of the noble defence of Zaragoza. Everywhere the pulses of the slave beat quicker and more strongly; and the heart of the freeman bounded proudly in his bosom. Poets and historians consecrated, in undying records, the virtue of her citizens; and Zaragoza, like Thermopylæ, will remain eternally linked with associations of the purest patriotism and devotion.

CHAPTER. IV.

CAPTURE OF OPORTO BY SOULT.—BATTLES OF CIUDAD REAL, AND MEDELLIN.

CHAP. IV.

1809. January.

WHILE the arms of France were thus successful in Spain, the Court of Vienna issued a protest against the unjustifiable treatment of the Spanish princes. Napoleon cherished views of ambition to the realization of which the subjugation of Austria was essential, and, therefore, probably was not averse from availing himself of the plea thus afforded, for declaring war against that power. Leaving instructions to his marshals to finish the conquest of the Peninsula by the occupation of Lisbon, Cadiz, and Valencia, he accordingly returned to Paris, in order to enforce, by his presence, the increased exertions which circumstances had rendered necessary.

The campaign had been disastrous to the Spaniards. The defeat and dispersion of their

CHAP. IV. 1809. February.

armies, the submission of Madrid, the capture of Zaragoza, and the embarkation of the British, contributed to spread panic and alarm throughout the kingdom. These reached even to Lisbon. Sir John Cradock, on whom the command of the British army had devolved, made every preparation to embark his forces, whenever Victor —then at Alcantara—should advance against the capital. This movemeut, however, did not take place. Victor waited to receive intelligence of Soult; and the aspect of affairs in Portugal was soon destined to undergo a striking change.

The current of evil fortune, which had threatened to overwhelm the cause of liberty and justice in the Peninsula, did not dispose the British government to shrink from further exertions in its behalf. At the very time when the French armies were in the full career of success, a treaty was signed at London, between Great Britain and the existing government of Spain, acting in the name and on behalf of Ferdinand. By this it was stipulated that the contracting powers should make common cause against France; that Great Britain should acknowledge no sovereign of Spain but Ferdinand VII., or his lawful heirs; and the Spanish go-

vernment engaged never to cede to France any portion of the territory or possessions of Spain.

February.

Notwithstanding this treaty, the Spanish government and people were by no means satisfied with the degree of zeal which Great Britain had manifested in opposing the invader. The Convention of Cintra had left an unfavourable impression on the people, which the subsequent operations of Sir John Moore had contributed still further to strengthen and diffuse. England, even in her most generous exertions, was considered only as pursuing a cold and selfish policy. Spain had not forgotten the base seizure and robbery of her treasure ships; and it is the natural consequence of such acts, that the offending should become to the injured nation, at once the object of suspicion and dislike.

These feelings were evinced, when, after the retreat of Sir John Moore, a corps, under Major-General Sherbrooke, was directed to proceed to Cadiz, to secure that important stronghold, and sustain the efforts of the patriotic forces in the south. The Supreme Junta, on their arrival, positively refused to admit the British within the walls of the city, alleging

Seville, Mar. 1.

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that, though their own feelings would have led them unhesitatingly to rely on British honour, yet the confidence of the people in their ally was so entirely overthrown, that the presence of an English force could not but be productive of the worst consequences. General Sherbrooke, therefore, after much fruitless negotiation, returned to the Tagus, and the views of the British government became principally directed to the defence of Portugal.

The government of that kingdom, conscious of their own limited resources, had thrown themselves in sincerity and good faith on the protection of England. Under her influence and guidance much had been done to model and discipline the Portuguese army. General Beresford was appointed Marshal and Commander-in-chief of the whole forces of the kingdom; a body of ten thousand men had already been regimented under the direction of British officers, and half that number of recruits were in process of discipline at the different depôts.

The services rendered by Sir Robert Wilson, at the head of a small band of volunteers, gave flattering promise of what might be expected from a Portuguese army when regularly dis-

ciplined and equipped. While affairs were at the lowest ebb in Spain, that enterprizing officer advanced to the frontier; and, acting in conjunction with the Spaniards beyond the Agueda, by a series of spirited and judicious movements, kept open the communication with Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, and held in check the enemy's force in that neighbourhood. In the meanwhile the French had been forced to re-cross the Tagus; and a division of Cuesta's army, under the Duke del Albuquerque, having gained considerable advantages over Victor's force at Consuegra and Mora, the career of that leader was for a moment checked. These events tended greatly to revive the confidence of the Portuguese people. Twenty thousand of the native troops were taken into the pay of England; the raising of fresh levies went on with increased vigour; and Sir John Cradock's force having been augmented to seventeen thousand men, the people once more began to regard the future fortunes of their country with confidence and hope.

On the northern frontier, however, the prospect had been gradually darkening. On the twenty-seventh of February, Soult crossed the Minho at Orense; and a few days afterwards,

CHAP. IV. attacked Romana in the neighbourhood of Monterrey, killed and made prisoners a large portion of his army, and captured the greater part of his baggage and artillery. Soult then prepared to enter Portugal, leaving Ney in Gallicia. The French bulletins had announced that his army would cross the Minho from Tuy on the eleventh of February, and marching direct on Oporto and Lisbon, would reach the former city on the twentieth, and enter the capital by the end of the month. But though his progress was unopposed by any force but that of militia and the surrounding peasantry, his army had suffered too severely in the winter campaign, to enable him to realize the expectations of Napoleon. Provisions, too, were deficient, the hospitals were filled, and so limited were the means of overcoming the various impediments, to the immediate invasion of Portugal, that it was not till the twenty-sixth of March that Soult appeared before Oporto.

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His march had not been accomplished without opposition. Several engagements took place; and the peasants, flocking from all quarters, joined the militia, and demanded to be led against the enemy. This, however, was not the policy

of General de Freire. He determined to retire before the French, and occupy a strong position in the neighbourhood of Oporto. A mutiny was the consequence. De Freire was suspected of treason, and brutally murdered by the troops; and Baron D'Eben, a German officer in the service of England, was appointed his successor. With about twenty-three thousand men, of whom two thousand were regulars, this officer endeavoured to oppose the advance of Marshal Soult. The attempt was a vain one. The Portuguese force, undisciplined, and without subordination, was speedily routed; and the French having found one of their fellow-soldiers horribly mutilated by the natives, no mercy was shewn in the pursuit.

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March.

Baron D'Eben vainly endeavoured to rally the fugitives, and embody them for the defence of Oporto. An army composed of such materials, though it may be dispersed at a breath, can only with extreme difficulty be rallied. Soult experienced little further opposition till he reached Oporto; and that city was carried by assault, on the twenty-ninth of March. A scene of dreadful carnage ensued. The cavalry charged through the streets, slaughtering the in-

Mar. 29.

CHAP. IV. habitants without discrimination of age, sex, or party. Terrified by the sight of such horrors, the people fled in crowds to the bridge, but were encountered there by showers of grape-shot and musquetry. Others endeavoured to cross in boats; these, too, were fired on; and above three thousand of the inhabitants were either drowned or shot in this quarter of the city. Altogether, the slaughter was very great, and would undoubtedly have been still greater, had not Marshal Soult exerted himself with honourable zeal to put a stop to the excesses of his troops.

1809. March.

Oporto, which had thus easily been occupied by the enemy, might, under a better organized system of defence, have opposed a very formidable obstacle to the French armies. The garrison consisted of about twenty thousand men, and the city had recently been covered by a line of detached works, extending from the Douro to the sea, on which were mounted about two hundred pieces of artillery. But want of discipline and subordination again proved fatal. Several of the superior officers, who endeavoured to restore obedience, were murdered by the soldiers, under charge of treason. No further

efforts were made to regulate the defence. During two days an useless fire was kept up on the enemy, while busied in preparations for the assault. The soldiers acted on the impulse of individual courage, but without concert or obedience.

Thus was it that the second city of the kingdom fell, almost without a struggle, into the hands of the enemy. But Soult, notwithstanding his success, did not deem it prudent to advance immediately on Lisbon. The hostility of the natives rendered the communication between the French corps destined for the reduction of Portugal, at once difficult and precarious; and before quitting Oporto, he wished to receive intelligence of the movements of Victor and Lapisse, the latter of whom, with a corps of five thousand men, was directed to threaten the frontier between the Douro and Almeida; and subsequently to join Victor whenever Soult should have advanced on the capital. No intelligence, however, of either of these leaders reached Oporto; and Soult, averse to commit his army by any uncombined movement, applied himself to secure and con-

CHAP. IV. ciliate the portion of the kingdom already overrun by his armies.

1809. March. In the meanwhile, the division of native troops, under General Silveira, were not idle.

Mar. 25. That General had succeeded in regaining possession of Chaves, and capturing about thirteen hundred of the garrison. He then made every effort to cut off the communication of the French army with Spain, by securing the bridge of Amarante, and strengthening the line of the Tamega. The activity of Silveira, who succeeded in repulsing the enemy in several attacks, tended greatly to raise the hopes of the Portuguese. The peasantry again took arms, and came in crowds to the field. Colonel Trant, who commanded at Coimbra, took the field at the head of a body of militia and volunteers; and Romana, who had received a reinforcement of three thousand men, already threatened the enemy's communications in Asturias.

We must now turn to England. The disasters attendant on the retreat of Sir John Moore, and the wretched condition to which his army had been reduced, materially deranged the projects of the British government. The troops

embarked at Corunna, instead of sailing direct for Lisbon or the south of Spain, had been under the necessity of returning to England, and the hope of successful resistance to the French power in the Peninsula had become more feeble in the minds of all.

The British ministry, however, were not disheartened by the reverses of the preceding campaign. They served only to stimulate them to renewed exertions, and, at the close of February, Sir Arthur Wellesley, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, resigned his office and seat in Parliament, to assume the command of the British forces in the Peninsula. It was determined to reinforce the army in Portugal; and in March the expedition with Sir Arthur Wellesley sailed for Lisbon. His instructions were, in case that city should have been evacuated by Sir John Cradock, to proceed to Cadiz, and land there, if the government would consent to the admission of British troops into the garrison. The contemplated alternative, however, did not occur. Sir John Cradock had been engaged in preparations for the defence of the city; and that officer, on being superseded by Sir Arthur Wellesley, was appointed governor of Gibraltar.

CHAP. IV. 1809. March. In Spain, the current of events had been unfavourable to the patriots. In La Mancha, the Duke del Albuquerque had distinguished himself in some affairs, of which the results would have been greater, but for the ill-judged interference of Cartoajal, in whom the chief command was vested. The utter incompetence of this person was fully evinced at the battle of Ciudad Mar. 27. Real, where his army was completely routed by Sebastiani. In this engagement no strenuous resistance appears to have been made. The Spaniards were at once driven from their position in utter confusion. Three thousand of their number were killed in the pursuit, and four thousand prisoners and eighteen guns were captured by the enemy.

On the day following, a disaster still more fatal befell the Estramaduran army, under Cuesta. On the eighteenth, Victor had succeeded in forcing the defences of the Puente del Arzobisbo, and drove back the troops, which had been posted there, to Miravete. He then succeeded in re-establishing the bridge at Almaraz, which, owing to the cowardice or treachery of Henestrosa, who commanded at that point, was effected without difficulty. Victor was thus enabled to pass over

his artillery, and collect his whole army at Trux- CHAP. IV.
illo, where he gained possession of the mag- 1809.
azines of the Spanish army. March.

Cuesta, having retired to Santa Cruz, was reinforced by a detachment of about four thousand men, under the Duke del Albuquerque, and at length determined to give battle. With this view, he took up a position near Medellin, forming his whole force in a single line, about a league in extent, without any reserve. The ground thus occupied, was singularly ill-chosen. It consisted of a wide and open plain, without cover of any kind; and the same unhappy qualities which had distinguished Cuesta at Rio Seco, were again conspicuously displayed at Medellin.

The Spanish army consisted of about twenty thousand infantry and two thousand cavalry. The left wing was commanded by Henestrosa, which occupied ground somewhat higher than the rest of the position. The centre was commanded by Don Francisco Trias; the right by Don Francisco de Equia. The cavalry were on the left, where the enemy presented the greatest force.

The army of Victor, though infinitely superior

CHAP. IV. 1809. March. in the quality of the troops, was somewhat numerically inferior. It consisted of about eighteen thousand foot and two thousand five hundred horse, and was formed in an arc, extending between the Gaudiana and a cultivated ravine, which reaches from Medellin to the village of Mengabril. Victor placed his cavalry on the right, and the front was covered by six batteries, each of four guns.

Mar. 28. The action commenced by an attack on the Spanish centre, supported by a brigade of cavalry. This was gallantly repulsed, and the Spanish line advancing, succeeded in taking one of the enemy's batteries on the left. The French left wing gave way, and was followed with effect for two hours. The cavalry was ably manœuvred by General Lasalle, who retired slowly, and having gained a favourable position, turned on the Spanish horse, and put them to the rout. The attack on the centre was then renewed, and the infantry disheartened gave way. Panic spread through the ranks, and the soldiers, casting away their arms, sought safety in flight. Every effort of Cuesta to restore order proved abortive. The French followed up their success, giving no quarter in the pursuit.

In this disastrous battle the loss of the Spaniards was very great. It has been stated at twelve thousand killed, and seven or eight thousand prisoners; but this is probably an exaggeration. Nineteen pieces of cannon were taken by the French, whose loss in the action amounted, by their own account, to four thousand.

Calamitous as the battles of Medellin and Ciudad Real unquestionably were, neither the Supreme Junta nor the people were disheartened by the misfortunes of their armies. The proceedings of the former evinced no symptom of alarm or despondency; a vote of thanks was passed to Cuesta and his army; and so little had that General declined in the opinion of his countrymen, that he speedily received the appointment of Captain-General of the province. In the meanwhile, he retired to Almandrelejo, where he succeeded in collecting a force nearly as imposing as that with which he had encountered the enemy at Medellin.

CHAPTER V.

ATTACK AND CAPTURE OF OPORTO BY THE BRITISH.

CHAP. V.

1809. April.

On the twenty-second of April, Sir Arthur Wellesley reached Lisbon, and was invested with the supreme command in Portugal. From the period of that event a new era commences in the war. His appointment gave unity of action and purpose to the British and Portuguese forces, and at once put a stop to those unfortunate jealousies and distractions, which had already occurred but too frequently between the leaders of the allied armies.

The forces of the enemy, against whom he was to act, were on the other hand divided. Soult had concerted with Victor a combined attack on the unconquered provinces of Portugal. The former was preparing to advance through Coimbra upon Lisbon, while Victor was to co-

operate by marching from Alcantara on Abrantes, and, having secured that fortress, to continue his progress to the capital.

Many delays occurred, however, in the execution of this project, which, had it been promptly carried into effect, must, in all probability, have caused the embarkation of the English army, and given a new aspect to the war. But Soult remained long inactive at Oporto, influenced at once by the dread of committing his army by an unsupported operation, and by the increasing embarrassments of his position. The bridge of Amarante was in possession of the Portuguese, and thus his only line of communication with Spain to the east had been cut off.

A body of six thousand men, under Delaborde and Loison, were accordingly despatched with orders to gain possession of the bridge, at any sacrifice. General Silveira was at Penafiel, from which town he withdrew on the approach of the enemy, and fell back to the Campo de Manhufe. On the two following days some skirmishing took place, and Silveira deemed it prudent to fall back to Amarante, and limit his efforts to defending the passage of the bridge. The town, which stands on a declivity on the right bank of the

CHAP. V. 1809. April. Tamega, was instantly attacked and carried by the enemy. Every effort was then made to gain possession of the bridge; but so firm was the resistance of the Portuguese troops, and so strong were the works by which it was defended, that the enemy were uniformly repulsed, and at length driven from the town. In this affair Lieut.-Colonel Patrick, an English officer, who had recently accepted a commission in the Portuguese service, was killed.

On the day following, the French regained the town, and a fortified convent in front of the bridge. The Portuguese, however, still kept possession of the suburb on the other side of the river, and their batteries commanded the approach. Delaborde, despairing of success from the heavy loss he had already sustained, had issued orders for the construction of a wooden bridge at some distance from the town; but an officer of engineers, having proposed the construction of a mine, the experiment was tried with success. A breach was effected in the works, which the French infantry successfully assaulted; and the cavalry, having crossed the river, drove the Portuguese from the suburb on the opposite bank. In these engagements the

native troops behaved with distinguished gallantry and resolution. CHAP. V. 1809. April.

The reader must now be aware of the general state of affairs in the Peninsula, when Sir Arthur Wellesley landed in Portugal. He at once perceived that the numerical superiority of the enemy was neutralized by the separation of their corps; and while the movements of Lapisse and Victor were cautious and hesitating, he determined, by a prompt and rapid advance, to attack Soult, and drive him from Oporto. This resolution was communicated to Cuesta, who was requested to content himself with keeping Victor in check, until the return of the British from Oporto, when the two armies might act in combination on the south of the Tagus.

In pursuance of the project thus ably conceived, a division, commanded by General Mackenzie, and a brigade of heavy cavalry under General Fane, were left at Abrantes, to watch the movements of Victor; and the rest of the army was put in motion on Coimbra. In that city, the whole British force was assembled on the fifth of May; and on the ninth it continued its advance. The division of General Hill was directed to embark at Aveira for Ovar, in order

May 9.

CHAP. V. 1809. May.

to take the enemy in flank, and force them back from the Vouga; and Beresford, with a strong detachment, chiefly composed of Portuguese, moved upon Vizeu, to cut off the retreat of Soult by Amarante. The main body proceeded by the direct route; and on the tenth encountered the enemy's advanced posts, which were

May 11.

driven back. On the day following, two divisions, strongly posted on the heights above Grijon, were dislodged from their position, and pursued with success till nightfall, when the British army halted with their advance, on the heights beyond Cavalleros, about two leagues from the Douro. During the night the enemy continued their retreat.

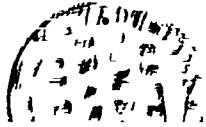
In the meanwhile, the object of Sir Arthur Wellesley in these movements, could not be supposed to escape the penetration of Soult. He saw the danger of being speedily enclosed in the north of Portugal; and determined to extricate himself from the increasing perils of his position, by evacuating the country. Measures were accordingly adopted for this purpose. Preparations were instantly set on foot for removing the sick and the baggage; and having destroyed the pontoon-bridge across the Douro, and given orders that

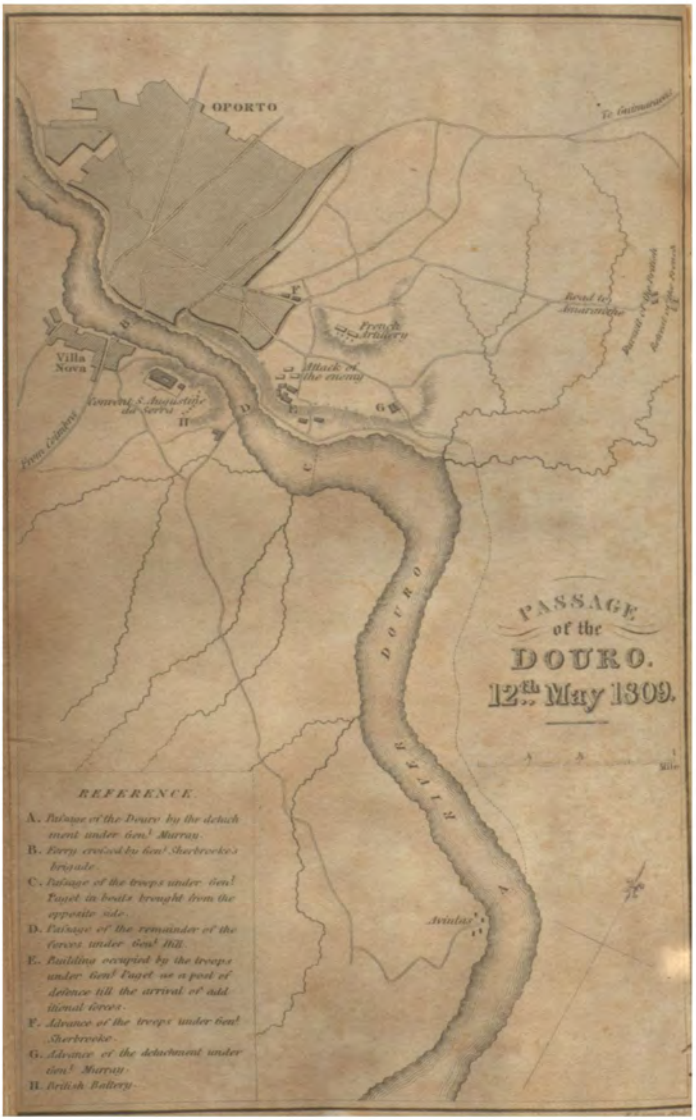
all the boats should be brought to the right bank of the river, he imagined himself secure from immediate attack. He imagined, too, that Sir Arthur Wellesley would avail himself of his maritime resources, and embarking his troops, endeavour to effect a landing near the mouth of the Douro. This would have allowed time for the leisurely retreat of the army; and orders were despatched to Loison, requiring him to maintain his ground at Mezamfrio and Peza da Ragoa, in order to prevent the passage of the river being effected at either of these points.

Had the calculations of Soult been realized, with regard to his enemy's intentions, no obstruction would have existed to his retreat into Gallicia; or by advancing on Beresford with his whole force, he might have crossed into Beira. But Sir Arthur Wellesley had bolder measures in contemplation. He determined at once to cross the river, and drive the enemy from Oporto. With this view, General Murray was detached to Avintas, a ford about five miles higher up, where he was directed to cross the river with his brigade, and send down any boats which he might be able to procure. The brigade of

CHAP. V. 1809. May. Guards, under General Sherbrooke, received orders to cross the ferry below the city at Villa Nova. The main body, under his own immediate command, were to attempt a passage at the Convent of St. Augustino da Serra, which occupies a height nearly opposite to the town. The Douro was at that spot nearly three hundred yards broad, extremely rapid, with considerable heights on the right bank, and a large unfinished building designed for the Bishop's palace, which could be made serviceable as a post of defence by those who first landed, till sufficient numbers should have crossed the river to enable them to advance on the town. To protect the passage, several guns had been planted in the garden of the Convent.

May 12. By aid of the inhabitants, two boats had been procured from the opposite side of the river, and in these, three companies of the Buffs immediately passed the river. Other boats were speedily despatched by the zeal of the people; and the embarkation of the troops was rapidly continued. General Paget was among the first detachment; he immediately took possession of the unfinished building already mentioned, and defended it with great gallantry, till




OPORTO
To Guimaraens
Road to Amarante
Villa Nova
Convent S. Augustine da Serra
From Coimbra
French Battery
Attack of the enemy
DOURO
RIVER
Avintas
PASSAGE
of the
DOURO.
12th May 1809.
Miles
REFERENCE.
A. Passage of the Douro by the detachment under Genl Murray.
B. Ferry erected by Genl Sherbrookes brigade.
C. Passage of the troops under Genl Paget in boats brought from the opposite side.
D. Passage of the remainder of the forces under Genl Hill.
E. Building occupied by the troops under Genl Paget as a post of defence till the arrival of additional forces.
F. Advance of the troops under Genl Sherbrooke.
G. Advance of the detachment under Genl Murray.
H. British Battery.

the arrival of the forty-eighth, sixty-sixth, and a Portuguese battalion, when the contest was continued on more equal terms. Early in the engagement General Paget lost an arm, and the command devolved on General Hill, who was still warmly contesting the ground, when the brigade of Guards and the twenty-ninth regiment appeared on the enemy's right; and in the opposite direction the troops were seen approaching from Avintas.

Under these circumstances, the enemy's columns fell back in confusion. The British charged up the streets of Oporto, making many prisoners, amid the most animated demonstrations of joyful welcome from the inhabitants. Handkerchiefs were waved from the balconies and windows,—blessings were breathed on the brave deliverers of the city, mingled, on all hands, with shouts of joyful and triumphant greeting.

Confusion and disorder had spread through the whole French army. The panic seemed even to increase when they gained the open country; and Major Harvey, with a single squadron of the fourteenth dragoons, charged through three battalions of French infantry,

CHAP. V. 1809. May.

marching in a hollow road, and brought off many prisoners, without sustaining any considerable loss.

Unfortunately, however, it was found impossible to take full advantage of the panic of the enemy, by continuing the pursuit. The army were without supplies of any kind; the rapidity of the advance from Coimbra having outstripped the most active exertions of the commissariat. The fatigue the troops had undergone rendered repose necessary; and the pursuit was, therefore, relinquished at the approach of evening. Had these obstacles not intervened, there can be little doubt that the whole army of Marshal Soult would have been destroyed.

As it was, however, nothing could exceed the boldness and the brilliance of the operations of Sir Arthur Wellesley. The Douro had been passed in open day, in the very face of a powerful enemy. One of the ablest and most experienced of the French Marshals had been taken by surprise, and his army driven from Oporto, with the loss of its sick and wounded, of a great part of its baggage, and of a considerable number of guns.

In truth, the very boldness and danger of the attempt contributed to its success. British Generals had acquired the reputation of being cautious, and averse from that daring policy which seeks great achievement through great hazard. So little, indeed, did the enemy contemplate even the possibility of Sir Arthur Wellesley attempting the passage of the Douro, that when a *chef de bataillon* gave notice that the English were passing, his assertion was disregarded. Nor did Marshal Soult receive intelligence of the event, till General Foy, who was severely wounded in the action, from the height opposite to the Convent, observed the troops actually crossing, and the Portuguese making signals to them from the walls. Never was so complete a victory obtained at a smaller expense of life on the part of the victors. The loss of the English army amounted only to twenty-three men killed, and ninety-eight wounded.

Driven from Oporto, Soult's first object was to effect a junction with Loison, and retire through Amarante on Zamora. But at Penafiel he learned that Beresford, having effected a junction with Silveira, had dislodged Loison from his position on the Tamega, and thus suc-

CHAP. V. ceeded in cutting off his intended line of retreat.

1809. May. The situation of Soult was now in the highest degree precarious; and, marching hastily on Braga, he directed Loison to retire in that direction.

At Guimaraens, Soult learned that the English army were endeavouring, by forced marches, to reach Braga before him, and thus cut off his retreat on Gallicia. Pressed on all sides, by hourly-increasing difficulties, Soult promptly determined to sacrifice his artillery, his baggage, and even his military chest, and escape by paths across the mountains impassable for a regular army.

In the meanwhile, Beresford had directed his

May 16. march on Chaves, to intercept the enemy in that quarter, while the British pushed forward on the other roads. At Salamonde a skirmish took place with the rear-guard of the French, and some prisoners were made. Soult continued his retreat with unrelenting rapidity along the main road, to a point where a footpath, branching off to the left, enabled him to avoid Chaves, where the Portuguese waited his approach.

Though it was impossible for Sir Arthur Wel-

lesley to come up with an enemy, who, for the sake of rapid movement, had sacrificed everything which constitutes an army; yet the French army, during the whole retreat, was subjected to very serious losses, by the armed peasants of the country. Masses of the people continually hovered on their flanks, and fired on them from every favourable position. A body of peasants, on the seventeenth, were endeavouring to destroy the bridge of Saltador, which crosses the Cabado, when the advanced-guard of the French came up. They were driven back with facility; and the army was proceeding on its march, when the sound of cannon was heard from the rear, and panic instantly spread through the whole column. The cry arose that the British were at hand. The cavalry pushed on through the ranks of the infantry, increasing the confusion. All were anxious to pass the bridge to escape from the approaching enemy. The army became a vast mob. The greater part threw away their arms, and everything which could encumber their movements. Many were precipitated into the torrent and drowned,—and many also were slain by the peasants, who con-

May 17.

CHAP. V. 1809. May. tinued firing from the rocks. All the baggage, which had escaped destruction at Guimaraens, was here lost.

In this lamentable and disgraceful state, the French army continued its march along foot-paths, frequently indented by the furrows of mountain torrents, and obstructed by masses of rock which the cavalry found great difficulty May 17. in surmounting, and at night reached Montelegre, a town about a league distant from the Gallician frontier. Here Soult discovered that the rapidity of his movements had been barely sufficient to secure his escape. The fires of the Portuguese were seen on the mountains, in the direction of Chaves; and leaving the cavalry to protect the rear from attack, Soult, after a few hours' halt, pushed forward across the frontier in the direction of Orense.

Here the pursuit terminated. Other and more important objects claimed the attention of Sir Arthur Wellesley in the south; and the army, by leisurely marches, retraced its steps.

Thus terminated this brief but glorious campaign. It comprised but a period of ten days; yet how much of honourable achievement is comprised within that narrow space! The liberation

of Portugal had been effected. The enemy had been chased from its frontier with the loss of their sick, baggage, and artillery; and Soult, with his dispirited, disorganized, and fugitive band, was forced to seek refuge in the very province from which, but a few months before, he had witnessed the disastrous embarkation of a British army.

Though the operations of Sir Arthur Wellesley, from the first moment when he put his army in motion on Oporto, are worthy of all admiration, they can scarcely with safety be considered as a precedent for future generals. To pass, in open day, a river so broad, so deep, and so rapid as the Douro, by means of a few boats, and in presence of a powerful enemy, must be held one of those felicitous violations of military rule, which it occasionally belongs to genius to make, but which men of more limited powers can scarcely hope to imitate with success. The power of detecting at a glance the moment when the ordinary rules of art may be happily disregarded, is the exclusive attribute of a bold, original, and powerful mind. Yet the triumph of Oporto is not more attributable to the skill and promptitude of Wellesley, than to the ne-

CHAP. V. 1809. May.

gligence of his opponent. That Marshal Soult should have suffered himself to be taken by surprise, and that the requisite precautions were not adopted for the safety of his army, must remain a blot on his military reputation. From the commencement of his retreat, however, all his operations are marked by talent and decision. A commander of lower qualities would probably have sunk under the difficulties by which he was environed; Soult rose and overtopped them. He unhesitatingly adopted the only measure by which his army could be rescued from their danger; and by the prompt sacrifice of his artillery and baggage he succeeded in evading his pursuers.

CHAPTER VI.

OPERATIONS IN GALLICIA AND CATALONIA.

THE expulsion of the enemy from Portugal was followed up by successes almost of equal magnitude in Gallicia. CHAP. VI 1809. March.

Soult had no sooner entered Portugal, than Romana, who had succeeded in recruiting a considerable force, put himself in motion against the corps of Ney. Towards the end of March a force, under Murillo, with a body of Portuguese, invested Vigo; and with the assistance of a British frigate, succeeded in forcing the garrison to surrender. It amounted to thirteen hundred men. On the day following, a French battalion, that approached the town in ignorance of its surrender, was attacked, and nearly the whole of its number perished. Roma- Mar. 27. Mar. 28.

CHAP. VI. na likewise, by a successful movement, surprised a body of the enemy in Villa Franca; and two battalions, which attempted to maintain the palace of the Duke of Alva, were made prisoners. He then crossed into Asturias; and, leaving his army under the command of Don Nicholas Mahy, he proceeded in person to Oviedo, for the purpose of dissolving the Junta, whose imbecility had become apparent, and appointing a council more competent to the administration of affairs.

1809. April. Apr. 17.

On learning this movement, a scheme of combined operations was concerted by Marshal Ney and the French commanders in Leon, for the purpose of surrounding him. The former had assembled about twelve thousand men at Lugo, and entered Asturias by routes almost impassable, in expectation of surprising the Spanish army. General Bonnet, at the same time, advanced along the coast from the East; and Kellerman, with about six thousand men, entered by Pajares.

The scheme, however well concerted, did not succeed. Mahy, fortunately apprised in time of the enemy's approach, retired into Gallicia. The French then advanced on Oviedo, occupying all

the avenues to that city, with the view of securing the person of Romana. That leader, however, succeeded in effecting his escape, and reached Gijon, where he embarked for Gallicia. CHAP. VI. 1809. May.

Some skirmishes took place between the Asturian troops, under Ballasteros, and the French, in the course of which the city of St. Andero was taken, and almost immediately retaken, with considerable loss on both sides.

In the meanwhile, Mahy, with the Gallician army, had made a rapid march on Lugo. Some skirmishes took place between the garrison and the besiegers, which terminated in favour of the latter; and the place would probably have fallen, had not Soult unexpectedly appeared with his army, and compelled the Spaniards to retire. May 22.

Alarmed by these indications of nascent vigour in his opponents, Ney resolved to attempt the re-capture of Vigo, and then forming a junction with Soult's force at Orense, to endeavour by a combined attack to effect the destruction of Romana's army. With this intention, he moved on Santiago, with eight thousand infantry and two thousand five hundred horse. On his approach, a corps of Romana's army, under General Noronha, fell back on Caldas and Ponte-

CHAP. VI. vrada, where they passed the river Sotomayor,
1809. and formed on the other side, having previously
June. destroyed the bridge at St. Payo. During the whole of the seventh of June, the French made vigorous efforts to effect the passage of the river, but their attempts uniformly encountered repulse. The attack on the bridge was re-
June 8. newed on the day following, but with similar success; and Ney, at length, found himself compelled to retreat, under circumstances which not only precluded his proposed junction with Soult, but rendered it necessary to take measures for the evacuation of Gallicia.

June 21. Accordingly, on the twenty-first, Ney gave up Corunna and Ferrol, and retired from the province through Lugo, Villa Franca, and Astorga.

Soult had not been more successful. Though almost daily within sight of Romana's army, the superior activity of his opponent, and his more accurate knowledge of the country, defeated all his efforts to bring him to battle. With an army harassed and exhausted by three weeks of incessant marching, Soult at length gave up his
June 24. abortive pursuit, and retreated to Sanabria, where having recruited the worn strength of

his soldiers, he proceeded to Zamora, in order to co-operate with the other armies. CHAP. VI. 1809. February.

We shall now give a brief sketch of the occurrences in Catalonia.

General Reding, who commanded in that province, had wisely determined to confine his efforts to the maintenance of a desultory warfare, without risking his army by a general engagement. Vigorous measures were adopted for the embodying of new levies, and every fifth man in the province was called on to bear arms. The French army having exhausted the resources of the country, was obliged to quit its position at Martorel and Villa Franca, and draw nearer to Tarragona.

Had Reding adhered to the prudent line of policy which his judgment dictated, there is little reason to doubt its being eventually crowned with success. But the popular voice was against it. The people were anxious for more immediate and striking results than could be expected to follow the more sure and cautious policy of their leader.

Against his better judgment, therefore, Reding consented to embark the army in a scheme for surprising Barcelona. A line of posts was

CHAP. VI. 1809. February. taken up, extending from Martorel through the Col de St. Christina to Tarragona; the head-quarters of the whole, under Don Juan de Castro, being established at Igualada.

The project, however, was soon frustrated. The intention of the Spanish leader was anticipated by St. Cyr, who, on the sixteenth of February, when a general movement was about to be commenced, attacked the left of their line, which had been too much extended, and drove it back on Igualada, where large magazines had been most imprudently collected. These were taken by the enemy. The Spanish army, having neglected to occupy the road Llaccuna in sufficient strength, were attacked in rear, and fell back, dispirited and in confusion, in the direction of Cervera, Cardona, and Manresa.

Feb. 16.

In consequence of this disaster, Castro was removed from the command, and subsequently disgraced his character by entering the service of the intruder.

No sooner did Reding receive intelligence of the defeat of Castro, than he determined to collect the scattered troops, and conduct them to Tarragona. Accordingly, with a Swiss battalion, three hundred horse, and six pieces of

light artillery, he set out, on the twentieth of February, to execute his important mission. He was speedily joined by the troops which were retreating from the Col de St. Christina, and by a body of twelve hundred men, who, after bravely defending themselves in the Monastery of Santa Cruz, had succeeded in cutting their way through the enemy. He then proceeded to St. Colonna de Queralt, where he effected a junction with Castro, by which his army was augmented to about ten thousand men.

At this moment, however, Reding received intelligence that Valls was already occupied by the enemy, with a view of intercepting his retreat. Had Reding then moved on Igualada, and subsequently on Montbuy, as St. Cyr was apprehensive he might, the French detachment at the former place, would probably have been cut off. But measures of promptitude and vigour were alien to the character of Reding. A council of war was held, by which it was decided that the army should proceed to Montblanch, where they arrived on the twenty-third. During the day, a reconnoitring party of the enemy had been observed in their rear; and thus certain

Feb. 23.

CHAP. VI. 1809. February. that their motions were known to the enemy, a second council of war was held, at which it was determined to pass the Col de Riba, and thence retreat as they best could to Tarragona.

The movement thus about to be attempted, was one of great danger. It was to be made in a very difficult country, and in face of an enemy very superior both in numbers and in the quality of

Feb. 25. his troops. In passing near to Valls the army of Reding was attacked by the division of Souham, by whom that town was occupied. That General allowed the advanced-guard and part of the centre to pass unmolested, in the hope of cutting off the rear. In this manœuvre, however, he was foiled by the able dispositions of Reding, who rallying his troops which had been thrown into temporary confusion by the unexpectedness of the attack, succeeded in repelling the enemy with considerable loss.

Feb. 26. On the following day, the retreat to Tarragona was continued. The French, however, again came up with augmented force, and an engagement followed. The Spanish position was forced, yet the troops retreated from the field in good order for a considerable distance. Panic then seized them, and subordination was at an end.

The greater part of the soldiers, however, succeeded in reaching Tarragona, being favoured by the darkness. Reding arrived there on the night of the action. This brave but unfortunate leader had received several wounds, of which he made no mention in his despatches. One of these subsequently proved mortal. The artillery and baggage fell into the enemy's hands. February.

After the battle of Valls, St. Cyr remained for about three weeks in the plain of Tarragona, where he experienced continual annoyance from the attacks of the Miquelets. This circumstance and the difficulty of feeding his army in a situation where his communications and foraging parties were continually liable to be cut off, at length induced him to retire towards the Llobregat. The retreat of the French was of the greatest importance to the inhabitants of Tarragona. A fever had broken out in the city, and the departure of the enemy gave room for the distribution of the sick, and opportunity to relieve the over-crowded population collected within its walls. Reding died of his wounds. He was a Swiss by birth, and brother to the celebrated patriot, Aloys Reding. Theodore fell in April.

CHAP. VI. the cause for which Aloys had fought—the cause of freedom.

1809.

April. On the death of Reding, the Marquis de Coupigny succeeded to the temporary command of the Catalan army. He was superseded by Blake, whose powers were more extensive than those of his predecessors, being appointed Commander-in-chief in Catalonia, Valencia, and Arragon. The loss of nearly all the fortresses, and the dispersion of the armies, compelled him for a time to limit his views to the re-organization of the troops, and the encouragement of that species of harassing warfare for which the character of the country afforded such peculiar facilities.

Having succeeded in collecting a considerable force, the views of Blake became more extended. His first operations were fortunate. A French detachment, of about one thousand men, were cut off in an attempt to regain the fortress of Monzon. Blake then resolved to attempt the recovery of the city of Alcaniz, a position of considerable importance, as it intercepted the communication between Mequimenza and Tortosa, and commanded the high road to Valencia.

May. May 28. In this, Blake was again successful. The town

was taken; and the enemy, commanded by Suchet, were repulsed in their most powerful efforts to regain it. After four attacks, the French army were compelled to retreat with great loss.

The next object of Blake was the recovery of Zaragoza. With the united armies of Arragon and Valencia, he attacked the enemy under Suchet, who were strongly posted in front of the town. Here his good fortune failed. His troops were repulsed with considerable loss; and, harassed in his retreat by the French army, he took up a position on the heights of Sta. Maria, above Belchite, and resolved to stand the issue of a battle. Jun. 15.

This too was unfortunate. The raw Valencian troops gave way with little resistance. The panic spread, and the whole army soon fled in confusion, leaving their arms, artillery, and ammunition on the field. To this disgraceful conduct of the troops, a single regiment alone afforded an exception. They rallied at a short distance from the field, but were speedily cut to pieces. Jun. 18.

Suchet rapidly followed up the advantage he had thus easily acquired. He entered Alcaniz,

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Calanda, and Carpe, making many prisoners, and dispersing everything opposed to him. In Arragon resistance was no longer attempted, and Blake retired into Catalonia, where he endeavoured to re-organize his scattered army.

It was at this period that the system of Guerilla warfare, which had spontaneously sprung up in different parts of the Peninsula, became so widely extended as to exercise an important influence on the character of the contest.

When the French first attempted the subjugation of Spain, so pervading was the hostility of the natives, that it was found necessary to divide their armies into small bodies, in order to procure subsistence, and maintain subjection in the towns and villages. Inferior officers were thus raised into commanders; and, restrained by no feeling of responsibility, plunder, cruelty, and oppression, on the one hand, were followed by hatred and desire of vengeance, on the other. Thus strife, of the most deadly and inveterate character, was daily waged between the invaders and the native population. Many of the latter, rendered desperate by the destruction of their property, fled to the mountains, where they remained, unless when compelled

by necessity to descend to the neighbouring villages in search of provisions. When at these times they chanced to encounter a small party of the enemy, an irregular fight ensued. No quarter was given on either side, and the bloody character of these contests tended still further to increase the feelings of animosity on both sides. The French, indignant at the slaughter of their countrymen, by men whom they at once feared and despised, continued to wreak their vengeance on the defenceless inhabitants. These were driven in greater numbers to join the desperate and lawless bands in the mountains; and thus arose that general and extended system of warfare, which carried with it results far greater and more important to the cause of Spain, than the greatest successes which her armies had been able to achieve.

The augmented atrocities of the invaders, tended only to deepen the hatred of the nation, and to impress more indelibly the necessity of resistance. Unity of sentiment and purpose brought with it a certain unity of action in the undirected efforts of the people; and to regular warfare succeeded a system of war in detail,—a species of organized disorder,—of petty but fe-

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rocious contests, at once suited to the circumstances of the country, and the fierce and untamed spirit of its population. These bands, in their character and objects at once predatory and patriotic, were joined by active and enterprizing men of all classes. Intelligence of their successes, exaggerated by frequent repetition, spread like wildfire through the country, stimulating the hopes, and increasing the confidence of the people; and the French soon found themselves assailed by an instrument of tremendous power, to which no efficacious resistance could be offered.

The Guerillas were without uniform and without pay. Having a perfect knowledge of the country, they assembled or dispersed at pleasure; and thus while they were always prepared to co-operate for the destruction of such bodies of the enemy as approached their district, they in a moment became intangible to any superior force detached in pursuit.

In the different provinces, leaders of distinguished talent and enterprize occasionally arose, who gave to this desultory warfare additional vigour and effect. The names of men, who contributed so powerfully to the liberation of their

country, merit record. In Old Castile the Guerillas were commanded by Juan Diaz Martin, better known by the title of the Empecinado. In Asturias, the chief of this body was Juan Diaz Porlier. In Navarre, Don Mariano de Renovales, who had distinguished himself by the defence of the Convent of St. Joseph, during the siege of Zaragoza, collected a band of mountaineers, and occasioned much annoyance to the enemy. High offers were made, in hope of inducing him to join the French service; but the patriotism of Renovales was inflexible.

Last, not least, was Xavier Mina. This celebrated leader brought the system of Guerilla warfare to its greatest perfection. In the northern provinces he occasioned the most important losses to the enemy, by his boldness and perpetual vigilance. The most strenuous efforts were repeatedly made to surprise and annihilate his force; but in vain. His band was like the Giant, in Ariosto, whose limbs, when severed by the sword of Astolfo, again united, and presented an antagonist, whom the most powerful efforts of hostility could not subdue.

In the year following, Mina was taken by the enemy, and sent prisoner into France.—

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His uncle, Espoz y Mina, succeeded him in command; and, by that leader, the system of desultory warfare was carried on with undiminished vigour and success.

On the whole, since the commencement of the year, a material improvement had taken place in the prospects of the Spanish nation. The enemy had been compelled to a disgraceful abandonment both of Portugal and Gallicia; a supply of money had been received from the American colonies; Napoleon, in the prosecution of the war with Austria, had at Essling encountered a severe reverse, and a British army was preparing to advance into Spain, with the view of driving the invaders from the capital.

In the succeeding portion of this work, Spain will no longer be found exclusively dependent on her own energies and resources. From the period when Sir Arthur Wellesley returned to the Peninsula, a mightier agent was continually at work for her deliverance. It is to the operations of the British armies that the attention of the reader will henceforth be chiefly directed; and the narrowness of our limits demands that the efforts of the native troops—rarely attended by important or permanent success—should be noticed with comparative brevity.

CHAPTER VII.

CAMPAIGN OF WELLESLEY AND CUESTA.

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On their return from Oporto, the British army concentrated on the Tagus. Victor had withdrawn from the frontier of Portugal to Talavera de la Reyna, where he was kept in check by Cuesta. Sir Arthur Wellesley, therefore, found himself at liberty to engage in operations for the liberation of Spain.

At the period in question, the distribution of the French armies was nearly as follows:— Victor, with about twenty-three thousand men, was on the Tagus; a corps of eighteen thousand, under Sebastiani, was in La Mancha; the corps of Ney, Mortier, and Soult, amounting in all to about sixty thousand men, were in Gallicia, Leon and Old Castile; ten thousand were in the neighbourhood of Madrid; in Ar-

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ragon and Catalonia there were about forty thousand; and, in addition to the force already enumerated, there was a division of cavalry, under Kellerman, in Old Castile, employed in maintaining the communication between Madrid and Burgos. Neither the army in Catalonia nor the force of Kellerman, however, could be considered as disposable for the general purposes of the war, unless in cases of the greatest emergency.

The allied armies were disposed in the following manner:—The British, consisting of about nineteen thousand infantry, and fifteen hundred cavalry, were, in the neighbourhood of Abrantes, preparing to enter Spain; the Estramaduran army, under Cuesta, occupied the left bank of the Tagus, and commanded the bridge at Almaraz,—it consisted of about thirty-seven thousand men; a force of nearly eighteen thousand, under Vanegas, was in the Carolinas; the army of Romana, about fifteen thousand strong, was in Gallicia, and might be expected to hold in check the corps of Ney. Blake, with about twenty thousand men, was in Valencia.

Such was the relative position of the hostile armies. The plan of operations concerted by Sir

Arthur Wellesley and Cuesta was as follows :— CHAP. VII.

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The British army was to march on Placentia, and having formed a junction with that under Cuesta, the combined armies were to advance on Madrid, with the view of liberating the capital. Twelve thousand Portuguese, under Beresford, with a Spanish force of about ten thousand men, commanded by the Duke del Parque, were to watch the operations of Soult, from the neighbourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo; and detachments of the Spanish army were, likewise, to be posted at Perales and Banos, to maintain these important passes, and check Soult's advance on Placentia. Vanegas was to descend from La Mancha, and advance on the capital from the south.

We would now say something of the country which is about to become the scene of operations, at once memorable and important.

Memoir of the Campaign of 1809.

The frontier of Spain, between the Douro and the Tagus, presents but two lines which an invading army can follow in advancing upon Madrid. The one runs by Salamanca, where it crosses the Tormes; the other by Placentia and the valley of the Tagus. The whole of the country between these two points is impracti-

CHAP. VII. 1809.

cable for artillery. The long chain of mountains, which take their rise towards the sources of the Tagus, follow that river in its course to where it enters the frontier of Portugal, and form an immense and almost impassable barrier from Segovia to Placentia. Between these mountains and the river lies what is called the valley of the Tagus, at some places only a few miles wide, at others enlarging in latitude according to the inflections of the river. Along this valley runs the principal road from Placentia to Madrid.

A country, which is bounded on one flank by a deep river, and on the other by a range of lofty mountains, must naturally be supposed to afford strong stations of defence. It does so at Oropesa, at Maqueda, and at Santa Cruz; and by defending these positions, the French would have been enabled to oppose very powerful obstacles to the advance of the allies.

The northern road to the capital, leading by the Douro, was defended by the army under Soult, consisting of his own corps, and those of Ney and Mortier, which could be concentrated by a few marches. Victor's force occupied the road leading by the valley of the Tagus. These

armies communicated across the intervening mountains, by the roads in the neighbourhood of Segovia, while by that leading from Salamanca to Placentia, either Victor or Soult would be enabled to act offensively against the rear of an enemy who should advance against the other. The immediate object of both leaders was to cover the capital, the possession of which, in every point of view, was of the greatest consequence to the invaders.

June.

On the twenty-seventh of June, the British army broke up from its cantonments on the Tagus, and, in two columns, directed its march on Placentia. Of these, one, consisting of three divisions of infantry, and the whole of the cavalry, advanced by way of Coria; the other column proceeded by a different route, and the whole army were concentrated at Placentia about the tenth of July. The Lusitanian legion, under Sir Robert Wilson, with several Spanish battalions of light infantry, were stationed on the Tietar, in order to act independently on the flank or rear of the enemy, as circumstances might direct.

Jul. 10.

From Placentia the operations of Sir Arthur Wellesley might, with equal facility, be directed

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against either Soult or Victor; and, while the British army remained in that neighbourhood, no decided indication had been given of the intention of its leader. But the moment it commenced its march from Placentia, the object of the allies could no longer remain concealed; and one of the French armies would, from that moment, find itself at liberty to engage in operations in support of that threatened with attack, either by effecting a junction by the passes of the Guadarama, or by moving towards Placentia, and thus placing itself in rear of the allied armies.

While the army remained at Placentia, Sir Arthur Wellesley went to the Spanish headquarters, and held an interview with Cuesta. He found that leader decidedly averse from the project of dividing his army, and anxious that the passes of Perales and Banos should be occupied by the British, in order that his own force might enjoy the chief honour of defeating Victor in the contemplated engagement. On these points, however, he was at length overruled, but the force eventually detached was altogether inadequate to the object. The plan of operations failed, too, in another particular. The orders

sent to Vanegas were countermanded by the Junta; and thus did the corps under that General remain inoperative, at the moment when its services were most necessary to the success of the campaign. July.

In the meanwhile, the most confident promises were made by Cuesta, that no difficulty would be found in provisioning the armies in the country they were about to enter; and on the return of Sir Arthur Wellesley, rapid preparations were made for continuing the advance on Madrid.

On the eighteenth, the army broke up from Placentia, and halted at Majadas; thus clearly indicating that the corps of Victor was about to become the immediate object of hostile operation. On the twentieth, the British headquarters were at Oropesa, where a junction was effected with Cuesta's army. On the twenty-second, the advance was continued; and the enemy were driven from the town of Talavera de la Reyna, across the Alberche, where Victor placed his army in position. Jul. 18. Jul. 22.

Sir Arthur Wellesley was anxious to attack the enemy on the morning of the twenty-third, but to this measure Cuesta refused his

CHAP. VII. 1809. July. assent. In vain did the British General urge the inevitable dangers of delay in the precarious position of the armies, and entreat that time so precious should not be wasted in inaction. Cuesta could neither be swayed by argument nor influenced by entreaty. He was obstinate and lethargic; fell asleep during the conference; and Sir Arthur Wellesley felt the full extent of his misfortune, in being thus dependant on a man, who, however honest in principle, was evidently wanting in all the qualities of a General.

In the meanwhile, Sir Robert Wilson quitted his position on the Tietar on the fifteenth, and Jul. 23. on the twenty-third reached Escalona, a town about eight leagues distant from Madrid, and in rear of Victor's army. In consequence of this movement, the French army fell back during the night in the direction of Toledo.

Other circumstances likewise contributed to thwart the views of Sir Arthur Wellesley. The promise that his army during its advance would be furnished with the necessary supplies by the authorities of the country, had not been fulfilled. The troops had suffered considerably from want of provisions; and Sir Arthur, thus circumstanced,

deemed it right to inform Cuesta, that unless CHAP. V
furnished with the articles which he had hitherto 1809
repeatedly and vainly demanded, he could not July.
consent that his army—utterly deficient both in means of transport and subsistence—should advance to a greater distance from their resources.

This notification contributed still further to derange the cordiality of the allied leaders. Cuesta expressed his determination to pursue the enemy, even if unsupported by the British; and on the twenty-fourth of July, he put Jul. 24
his army in motion by Santa Olalla, where he arrived on the morning of the twenty-fifth.

Early on the twenty-sixth, the van of Cuesta's Jul. 26
army was attacked by the enemy, and after considerable resistance driven back in confusion. The Duke del Albuquerque advanced with his division to their support; and by a gallant charge repulsed the enemy, and thus enabled the defeated troops to rally. This timely success saved the army; for the road was blocked up with baggage and provision waggons, and panic had already begun to diffuse itself in the ranks.

After this engagement the Spanish army was suffered to fall back unmolested to the Alberche,

AP. VII. where a British force was stationed for its sup-
1809. port. The ground on which Cuesta halted
July. his army was low and unfavourable, with the river in its rear; yet in this position he determined to give battle. At daybreak, Sir Arthur Wellesley entered the Spanish camp, and sought an interview with Cuesta. The General he found asleep in his tent, and the troops in that state of disorder, into which an imperfectly disciplined army is almost necessarily thrown, by an unforeseen and hasty retreat. Every persuasion was adopted to induce Cuesta to quit his present dangerous position, and retire to the high ground on the opposite side of the Alberche. The old Spaniard, however, was deaf to argument. His constant reply was, "in these times a retiring army is always beaten;" and he therefore determined to maintain his ground.

Annoyed at the unreasonable and perverse obstinacy of his coadjutor, Sir Arthur Wellesley declined committing his army by any participation in a project so absurdly perilous, and fell back to a strong position in the neighbourhood of Talavera. Thus left unsupported, the eyes of Cuesta were at length opened to the danger which awaited him; and on the approach

of the enemy, he retired across the Alberche, and again united his army with the British. CHAP. VII 1809. July.

Intelligence of the movements of the allied armies had no sooner reached Madrid, than Joseph, accompanied by Marshal Jourdan, who acted as Major-General to the armies, set out from Madrid with all his disposable troops; and effected an union with the corps of Victor and Sebastiani, in the neighbourhood of Toledo. Immediate orders were despatched to Marshal Soult, to form a junction with the corps of Ney and Mortier; and, with this combined force, to advance, by rapid marches, on Placentia, with the view of intercepting the line of operations of the allied armies, and cutting off their retreat. Jul. 24.

The situation of Sir Arthur Wellesley had now become critical in the extreme. The army in his front amounted to about fifty thousand men; that advancing in his rear was considerably stronger. In such circumstances, had the army under Joseph remained—as it was their obvious policy to have done—on the defensive, no choice remained to the British General but to attack them under all advantages of position, or to retreat. In the former case,

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he could have derived little support from the Spanish army, whose want of steadiness and discipline disqualified them from manœuvring in presence of an enemy enjoying all the advantages of ground. In the latter case, the only road open was to the southward of the Tagus; and, to effect the passage of that river, when closely followed by a powerful enemy, would necessarily have been an operation of great difficulty and danger.

The plan of the campaign, therefore, appears to have been radically vicious. The allies were placed in a situation from the perils of which they could be extricated only by retreat. While every hour improved the situation of the French, it necessarily darkened the prospects of their opponents. In truth the utmost that could be hoped was, that the talent and promptitude of Sir Arthur Wellesley, would be found sufficient to extricate his army from its perilous position, after signalizing the prowess of British soldiers, by the acquisition of a barren though honourable victory.

Such was the situation of Sir Arthur Wellesley before the battle of Talavera. From

much of its danger, he was fortunately extricated by the blunder of the enemy, who determined on attacking the allied armies in their position. CHAP. VII. 1809. July.

The ground occupied by the allies, was about two miles in extent. The Spanish army was on the right, the British on the left of the line. The position of the former was extremely strong, being almost unapproachable, from the mud enclosures of olive grounds and vineyards in their front; and they were so posted in the ravines which abounded, as to be sheltered from the enemy's artillery. Their right was *appuyed* by the Tagus; their left by the British.

The ground on the centre and left of the line was more open, but intersected with roads leading to the town; and the front of the whole position was covered by a ravine formed by the winter torrents, but then dry. The left flank of the British rested on an eminence of considerable boldness, and their right on another somewhat lower, on which a redoubt had been begun, in order to secure the connexion of the armies, but was not sufficiently advanced to add much to the security of the troops stationed for defence of the height. These consisted of two brigades of infantry, under Brigadier-General

CHAP. VII. 1809. July. Campbell, supported by a battery of about ten guns. The Guards, General Cameron's brigade, and the German legion, formed the centre, under Lieutenant-General Sherbrooke. The division of General Hill was on the left, where two brigades of artillery were posted for defence of the hill in which the position terminated. The remainder of the guns were distributed on the most favourable points along the line.

The cavalry was commanded by Lieutenant-General Payne. Major-General Cotton's light brigade supported the right and centre. Brigadier-General Anson's, and the heavy brigade under General Fane, were on the left.

The Spanish infantry was formed in two lines, and in rear of the left the Duke del Albuquerque was stationed with the main body of the Spanish cavalry. Subsequently a detachment of about three thousand light infantry, under Don Luis Bassecourt, was moved to the valley below the British left, in order to observe the movements of a body of the enemy which appeared in the mountains beyond, but at too great a distance to exert any influence on the contest.

A division of infantry and a brigade of cavalry, under General Mackenzie, had been stationed

in a wood on the right of the Alberche, which covered the left of the British army. About noon, this advanced force was suddenly attacked by the enemy, who succeeded in penetrating between the two brigades of which it was composed. Some confusion ensued, but order was speedily restored by the exertions of the officers, and the retreat was finely covered by the brigade of Colonel Donkin, which retired and took up its position with perfect regularity and steadiness. The division of General Mackenzie was then posted as a second line in rear of the centre. Jul. 27.

In this affair Sir Arthur Wellesley narrowly escaped being made prisoner. He had ascended a tower immediately in rear of Mackenzie's division, to observe the motions of the enemy. Fortunately, he observed the troops to falter, and descended barely in time to escape, by throwing himself on his horse in the midst of the affray.

In the meantime, the enemy continued to push on his columns, and a partial action ensued along the whole front of the line. A division of cavalry advanced towards the right of the allies, and threatened the town of Talavera. But the difficulties of the ground, and the fire of the Spanish batteries, soon obliged them to re-

CHAP. VI. 1809. July. treat. A body of about five thousand Spaniards, however, though posted in the strongest manner, threw down their arms and fled.*

Under these circumstances, the whole French army, in number about fifty thousand, assembled in front of the position occupied by the allies. Towards evening, a resolute attempt was made to gain possession of the hill on the left, which was regarded as the key of the position. The enemy advanced at double-quick to the assault, covered by a heavy cannonade. The attack being unexpected, was for a moment successful, and the French gained possession of the height; but the forty-eighth and twenty-ninth regiments being brought up by General Hill, poured in a volley; and the twenty-ninth, by a most splendid charge, drove back the enemy in confusion, and established themselves on the summit.

In the course of the night another attempt

* So indignant was Cuesta at this dastardly conduct, that after the action he ordered the division to be decimated; and it was only at the earnest entreaty of Sir Arthur Wellesley, that he consented to a second decimation of those on whom the lot had fallen. In consequence, only six officers, and about thirty men were executed.—JONES.

was made to carry this important post. This too was unfortunate. Colonel Donkin's brigade had been moved up to support the troops on the hill; and the enemy were repulsed with little difficulty. The loss on both sides during these attacks was considerable. General Hill was at one time surrounded by the enemy, and received a wound in the shoulder.

The troops lay all night upon their arms in expectation of attack. At two in the morning, the Spanish line was alarmed by the approach of the enemy's light troops, who were received by a brisk discharge of musquetry, which ceased in about ten minutes; and the silence of night again prevailed on the field of battle.

Jul. 28. At length day broke on the contending armies, drawn up in battle-array, in the positions which they respectively occupied at the commencement of the action on the preceding evening. At five o'clock, two strong columns of the French were formed in front of the height on the left, which they had already twice vainly attempted to carry. Under cover of a tremendous fire from fifty pieces of cannon, the columns advanced across the ravine, which ran along the front of the position, and ascended

CHAP. VII. 1809. July. the acclivity on which were posted the brigades of General Tilson and General Richard Stewart. By the troops under these officers, they were received with the utmost gallantry and steadiness. A heavy fire of musquetry on both sides was followed by a charge from the British; and the assailants were driven back at the bayonet's point, with great slaughter. The British cavalry were ordered up to charge the right flank of the retiring column, but unfortunately it was at too great a distance.

The object, however, was too important to be lightly given up by the enemy. The attempt on the height was repeatedly made, and repeatedly terminated in a similar result, till, disheartened by the uniform failure of their efforts, they retired from the scene of contest, leaving the ground covered with their dead.

About eleven o'clock the firing ceased. A period of truce was tacitly recognised by both armies, which the French employed in cooking their dinners, while the British reposed on the ground, apparently regardless of the presence of their enemy.

During this interval, likewise, the wounded on both sides were conveyed to the rear. From

the closeness of the engagement, they lay intermingled on the field; and while engaged in this humane and peaceful duty, a friendly intercourse took place between the French and English soldiers; and, shaking hands, they mutually expressed admiration of the gallantry displayed by their opponents.

About one o'clock, it became evident, from several heavy clouds of dust, that the enemy's columns were again advancing. At two, the work of havoc recommenced with a heavy cannonade, followed by a general attack on the whole front of the British line. The enemy's infantry came on in four distinct columns, covered by their light troops, while the cavalry, drawn up in rear, waited only for the first appearance of confusion to complete the victory by an overwhelming charge.

Notwithstanding the destruction which the French artillery occasioned in their ranks, the British did not open fire till the close approach of the columns enabled them to do so with effect. That on the right, under General Sebastiani, was suffered nearly to reach the summit of the hill crowned by the redoubt, before any obstruction was made to their progress.

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A heavy fire was at length opened by General Campbell's brigade, and two Spanish battalions, posted on the height. The British then charged, and in gallant style drove the enemy before them; and, carrying a battery, took thirteen pieces of cannon. The broken column, however, having rallied, was again advancing, when it was charged in flank by a Spanish regiment of cavalry, and compelled once more to retreat in confusion.

In the meantime two columns on the enemy's right, consisting of Ruffin's and Villatte's divisions, supported by cavalry, again endeavoured to gain possession of the hill on the left. They were directed to support the attack on the front, by marching along the bottom of the ravine, and turning the flank of the position; while a body of light troops, by a wide movement across the mountains, were to threaten an advance on the rear. To watch the movements of the latter, a body of Spanish light infantry were moved into the valley, in rear of the left of the position.

These formidable preparations for the attack of what was unquestionably the most important point in the whole position, naturally excited apprehensions for its safety. The conical shape

of the hill did not admit of its being occupied by any considerable body of troops, and Sir Arthur Wellesley determined to derange, if possible, the combinations of the enemy, by a charge of cavalry. General Anson's brigade, consisting of the twenty-third light dragoons, and the first regiment of German hussars, supported by the heavy cavalry under General Fane, were accordingly ordered to charge the enemy's column, at the moment when emerging from the valley they should attempt to deploy.

These regiments advanced with great gallantry, regardless of the fire of several battalions of infantry. Unfortunately, the front of the enemy was protected by a deep ravine, which had not been perceived, and which was found impassable for many of the horses. Confusion ensued in consequence. A considerable body of the twenty-third, however, led by Major Ponsonby, succeeded in crossing it, and passing between the divisions of Ruffin and Villatte, fell with irresistible impetuosity on two regiments of mounted chasseurs, which at once gave way. The twenty-third was then charged by some regiments in reserve, surrounded, broken, and almost destroyed. A few only escaped (among

CHAP. VII. 1809. July. whom was Lord William Russel) by passing at full speed through the intervals of the French columns.

This charge was the only unfortunate occurrence of the day. It was ill-timed and injudicious. The ground had not been reconnoitred. Sir Arthur Wellesley's intention was, that the cavalry should charge when the enemy, by deploying, had extended and exposed their flank. When the charge was actually made, the enemy were still in column, and too strongly posted to afford any prospect of success. Yet notwithstanding its failure, the French were so astonished at the boldness and gallantry of the attempt, as to desist from all further effort to gain possession of the hill; and this imposing movement, which at first threatened to compromise the safety of the whole army, was in effect attended by no important result.

In the meanwhile, the entire corps of Marshal Victor advanced against the centre. One column, composed chiefly of Germans, deployed on the level ground before they attempted to ascend the position. The point selected for attack was immediately on the right of the ground occupied by General Hill's division, which form-

ed the extreme left of the line. On the first indication of the enemy's intention, General Sherbrooke gave orders that his division should prepare for the charge. The assailants came on, over the rough and broken ground in the valley, with great resolution, and in the most imposing regularity, and were encountered by the British with their usual firmness. The whole division, as if moved by one powerful and undivided impulse, advanced to meet them; and pouring in a most galling and destructive fire, their ranks were speedily broken, and they gave way.

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The impetuosity of the troops, however, was not to be restrained; and the Guards, having advanced too far in the ardour of pursuit, were powerfully attacked in flank by the enemy's reserve. The period was critical. In a few minutes the Guards had lost above five hundred of their number; their ranks were mowed down by the fire of the enemy's artillery; and the destruction of the whole brigade appeared inevitable. But the prescience of Sir Arthur Wellesley retrieved the army from the consequences of this misfortune. He had foreseen the danger to which the impetuosity of the Guards was likely to expose them, and ordered the forty-eighth re-

CHAP. VII. giment, and the cavalry under General Cotton, to advance to their support. Under the cover thus afforded, the Guards, entirely broken, were enabled to effect their retreat. The enemy then directed their efforts against the forty-eighth; but that regiment bravely stood its ground, till the Guards again rallying advanced with cheers to its support. The French then gave way, and were pursued for a considerable distance, though covered in their retreat by a strong body of cavalry and artillery.

1809. July.

Thus foiled at all points, the enemy withdrew their columns, and again concentrated on their position. But the fire of their artillery did not cease till dark. A dim and cheerless moon then rose, and threw a pallid lustre on the field, covered by the dying and the dead. Parties were sent out to bring in the wounded. The enemy was similarly employed, and large fires were lighted along the whole front of his line.

The loss of the British army in this battle was severe: it amounted in killed, wounded, and missing, to five thousand three hundred and sixty-seven, and was occasioned chiefly by the close and well directed fire of the French artil-

Spanish Infantry
British Cavalry
Column under Gen.l Ruffin
Reserve of Light Cavalry
Columns under Gen.l Hill
Columns of Infantry under Sir W. Stewart
French batteries
British Cavalry
French Cavalry
To Escalona
French Reserve
Spanish Cavalry
French batteries
Guards
Guards
Campbell
Mackenzie
Cole's Division under Gen.l Fane
British Cavalry
Redoubt
Spanish Cavalry
BATTLE OF Talavera at the PERIOD of the FINAL ATTACK on the Afternoon of the 28th July 1809.
Spanish Army
TALAVERA
French Cavalry
To Madrid
From Oropesa
From Arzobispo
River Tagus

lery, which was kept up with little intermission throughout the day. Great as this amount of casualties unquestionably was, in an army whose numerical force did not exceed nineteen thousand men, it would have been incalculably greater had not Sir Arthur Wellesley directed the different brigades to lie extended on the ground behind the crest of the ridge, and only exposed them to the full action of the guns on the approach of the attacking columns.

In this action, Major-General Mackenzie, and Brigadier-General Langworth, fell; Major-General Hill, and Major-General R. Campbell, were wounded.

The loss of the French, however, was much greater than that of the allies. It amounted to about ten thousand men. The loss of the Spaniards did not exceed twelve hundred and fifty in killed and wounded. The latter were only partially engaged; but the little which devolved on them to perform, was performed well.—Their presence in position prevented a considerable body of the enemy from becoming disposable for attack on the British. A body of Spanish artillery on the left was excellently

CHAP. VII. served; and their cavalry made a gallant charge, which was entirely successful.

1809. July. About six o'clock in the evening, a dreadful occurrence took place. The long, dry grass took fire, and the flames spreading rapidly over the field of action, a great number of the wounded were scorched to death. For those who escaped, a large hospital was established in the town of Talavera.

During the night, the soldiers lay upon their arms, without provisions of any kind. It was expected that the French would remain in their position, and renew the battle in the morning. But this anticipation was not realized. Under cover of the night they retired, leaving in the hands of the British twenty pieces of artillery. One standard was taken, and one destroyed, by the twenty-ninth regiment. At daybreak, the rear-guard, consisting of cavalry, was alone visible.

Jul. 29. In the course of the twenty-ninth, the army was reinforced by the arrival of a troop of horse-artillery, and a brigade of light troops from Lisbon, under General Crawford. Under the circumstances of his situation, however, it was im-

possible for Sir Arthur Wellesley to follow up his victory. The position he occupied was still one of extreme peril. A powerful enemy was advancing on his rear; and no reliance could be placed for the supply of his army, either on the promises of the Spanish General, or of the Junta.

The army of Vanegas, which, in obedience to the orders of the Supreme Junta, had advanced from Madrilejos, was engaged, during the twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth, in endeavouring, to dislodge the French garrison from Toledo. His advance pushed on during the night to the neighbourhood of Madrid, and took prisoners some patroles of the enemy. Vanegas, however, no sooner learned from the prisoners that Joseph and Sebastiani were approaching, than he recalled the parties which had crossed the Tagus; and, moving on his right, desisted from any further offensive operations.

The intelligence that Vanegas had failed in executing the part allotted to him, was speedily followed by information that Soult had with facility driven the Spaniards from the passes leading from Salamanca to Placentia. It was in consequence arranged between the Gen-

CHAP. VII. 1809. July.

erals, that the British army should immediately march to attack Soult, and that Cuesta should remain in the position of Talavera, to protect this movement from any operation of Victor. The wounded likewise were to be left in charge of Cuesta, who declared himself delighted with this mark of confidence, and promised, that, if by any chance a retrogressive movement should become necessary, his first care would be the safety of the British committed to his protection.

Aug. 3. On the morning of the third of August, the British accordingly commenced their march on Oropesa. On his arrival there, Sir Arthur Wellesley received intelligence that Soult was already at Naval Moral, thus cutting off the communication with Almaraz, at which place he was informed the Spaniards, in their retreat from Banos, had crossed the river, and destroyed the bridge.

The information thus brought, did not, however, change his intention of advancing against Soult, and bringing him to battle. But, shortly after, a courier arrived from Cuesta, announcing, that, as the enemy were stated to be advancing on his flank, and as it was ascertained that the corps of Ney and Mortier had been united un-

der Soult, he had determined on quitting his position, and joining the British army at Oropesa. This movement was executed the same night; and nearly the whole of the British wounded were left unprotected in the town of Talavera.

1809. August.

The conduct of Cuesta, in this precipitate retreat, is altogether indefensible. He had suddenly abandoned the position intrusted to him, without any urgent necessity; for it subsequently appeared that Victor was then at some distance, and not engaged in any movement on the Spanish army. Nothing indeed but the presence of a superior force, and the impossibility of providing for their safety, could justify his relinquishing the British wounded. The distance which separated the allied armies was only five leagues, and in the course of a few hours he could have exchanged communications with Sir Arthur Wellesley. But Cuesta, acting on his first impulse, put his army at once in motion; and, so regardless was he of the sacred trust which had been confided to him, that he allotted but seven waggons for the transport of the wounded. By indefatigable exertion, and by the sacrifice of much baggage, Sir Arthur Wellesley succeeded

CHAP. VII. in procuring about forty more, by which the greater number of the sufferers were rescued.

1809. August. In quitting the position of Talavera, Cuesta had abandoned the only situation in which the advance of Victor on the British rear could be resisted with any prospect of success. By this unexpected movement, the whole circumstances of the armies had been changed. Whether, had Cuesta remained faithful to his engagement, the projected scheme of operations was likely to be crowned with success, is a speculative question, on the discussion of which we shall not enter. This at least is certain, that by the vacillation of the Spanish leader the whole calculations of Sir Arthur Wellesley were at once overthrown. With a powerful enemy, both in front and rear, who, by a combination of movements, might bring an overwhelming force against him, one course only remained. The bridge of Almaraz had been destroyed, and Sir Arthur determined to throw his army across the Tagus by the bridge of Arzobisbo, which the retreat of Cuesta had left open to the enemy.

Aug. 4. Before quitting Oropesa on the morning of the fourth, Sir Arthur Wellesley had an interview with Cuesta, and represented to him that,

situated as the armies then were, the only prudent measure was to take up the line of the Tagus, and, in a strong defensive position, to await the collection of stores, and the occurrence of more favourable prospects. But the Spaniard, who, but the day before, had been driven by his fears to a precipitate retreat, now felt his courage restored by the presence of the British, and vehemently urged the propriety of giving battle to the enemy. He refused to accede to the proposal of Sir Arthur Wellesley, who tired with combating the reasons of so shallow and obstinate an opponent, at length thought it necessary to state, that whatever course the Spanish leader might pursue, he certainly would not expose the army under his orders to foolish and unprofitable hazard. On the conclusion of the conference, orders were accordingly given for the march of the British, who on the same day crossed the Tagus at Arzobisbo.

Aug. 5. On the fifth, the army pursued its march through a country of extreme difficulty, and halted in the neighbourhood of Valdela Casa. On the seventh it reached Deleytosa, where a halt was found necessary, in order to refresh the troops, whose sufferings had been very great,

CHAP. VII. 1809. August.

from the extreme heat of the weather, insufficient nourishment, and the miserable condition of the roads.

On the same day, Victor entered Talavera, where he behaved with the utmost humanity and kindness to the wounded British. Joseph, when it was ascertained that Sir Arthur Wellesley had crossed the Tagus, went to Aranjuez. Mortier and Soult marched on Arzobisbo, and Ney on Almaraz, with the view of cutting off the retreat of the Allies. But this object was defeated by the precaution of Sir Arthur Wellesley, who had posted the division of General Crawford to prevent the passage of the river.

In the meanwhile, Cuesta had followed the British in their retreat to the bridge of Arzobisbo, and leaving the Duke del Albuquerque with two divisions of infantry and one of cavalry to defend it, he withdrew the remainder of his army to Paraleda de Garben. The French, however, having taken post on the opposite side of the river, soon succeeded in discovering a ford by which they crossed, and surprising the Spaniards, drove them at once from the works, with the loss of thirty pieces of cannon. After this, Cuesta with his whole force

fell back on Deleytosa, while the British moved to Xaraicejo.

Frustrated in his hopes of passing the Tagus at Almaraz, which would have placed the allies in a situation of great danger, Soult was desirous of again uniting the corps of Ney and Mortier to his own; and, by a rapid march, to interpose his army between those of Wellesley and Beresford, while two divisions of the corps of Victor should guard the passages of the Tagus from Talavera to Almaraz. Soult then proposed to push on to Abrantes; and having gained possession of that important stronghold, to advance on Lisbon, entertaining little doubt of the immediate submission of the capital.

This plan, however, did not meet the approbation of Jourdan. The corps of Ney was ordered to Salamanca, in the neighbourhood of which the Spaniards, under the Duke del Parque, were actively engaged in the prosecution of a desultory war. Soult himself, was directed to remain at Placentia, and to leave the corps of Mortier to guard the Tagus.

Meanwhile, Sir Robert Wilson, who, at Escalona, found himself cut off by the enemy from Arzobisbo, moved rapidly to his right,

CHAP. VII. crossed the Tietar, and scrambling over the mountains, gained with difficulty the pass of Banos, at the very moment when the corps of Ney was discovered to be approaching on its march from Placentia to the North. Sir Robert Wilson, with his usual enterprize and gallantry, determined to make an effort to defend the pass; but, after a spirited resistance of several hours, the superior numbers of the enemy prevailed, and the Lusitanian legion was dislodged with great slaughter, and its fugitive remnant with difficulty escaped to Castello Branco.

1809. August.

Vanegas, after relinquishing his attempt on Toledo, remained with his army in the neighbourhood of Aranjuez. On the fifth of August, he succeeded in gaining a decided advantage over an advanced division of the enemy On learning the retreat of Cuesta, he subsequently fell back to Madrilejos, and opened a communication with that General, who directed him on no account to risk an action, but to remain prepared to combine his movements with those of the allied armies. But between Cuesta and the Supreme Junta there was no unity of purpose; and harassed by

Aug. 5.

inconsistent orders, Vanegas was unfortunately induced again to advance, and give battle to the corps of Sebastiani at Almonacid. This engagement, though many of the Spanish troops behaved with great gallantry, terminated in the complete defeat of the army of Vanegas. It was driven to the Sierra Morena, with the loss of all its baggage and artillery. Aug. 11.

With this action terminated the campaign which had been undertaken for the relief of Madrid, and the expulsion of the enemy from the central provinces of Spain. The British army at Xaraicejo, still served as a shield to the southern provinces, and Sir Arthur Wellesley, (whom the gratitude of his country had now ennobled,) considered it of importance to maintain the position he then occupied. But the total failure of supplies rendered this impossible, and about the twentieth of August he fell back through Merida on Badajos, in the neighbourhood of which he established his army. Aug. 20.

At this period all operations in concert ceased between the English and Spanish armies. The Supreme Junta complained bitterly of the retreat of the former, which left the road to Se-

CHAP. VII. 1809. August.

ville and Cadiz open to the enemy, while the Marquis Wellesley, then ambassador in Spain, made strong representations of the privations to which the British army had been exposed, by the inattention and neglect of the authorities. In the correspondence which ensued, it appeared that the measure of retreat had been forced on Lord Wellington, by the absolute impossibility of supporting his army in the ground he occupied; and that so far from shewing a contemptuous disregard of the wishes of the Junta, it was in compliance with their earnest entreaty that he had retained his army in the neighbourhood of Badajos, notwithstanding the well-known unhealthiness of the situation.

By these unpleasant discussions, however, a spirit of temporary estrangement was generated between the nations, and jealousies were excited which could not fail to operate injuriously on the interests of the common cause.

Thus ended the campaign. Of its policy we shall say little, because, in truth, little remains to be said. The calculations of the allied Generals appear throughout to have been founded on principles radically vicious, and it seems impossible that any permanent and important benefit could,

under the most favourable circumstances, have resulted from the execution of a project so rash and precarious. Fortunately there was no concert in the operations of the adverse Generals. The battle of Talavera was fought by the enemy, in utter recklessness and ignorance of the advantages they possessed. Had Lord Wellington been induced to proceed another march towards Madrid, and had the advance of Soult been accelerated by a single day, the retreat of the British army would have been cut off, and the most fatal consequences must have ensued.

In all the details of the campaign, however, abstracted from the error of its general conception, we find the same skill, promptitude, and unhesitating self-reliance, by which the character of Lord Wellington has been uniformly marked. The ground which he selected to receive the enemy's attack was admirably chosen. His manœuvres during the battle were those of a great general, at once perceiving and preserving the full advantages of his situation. His subsequent determination of attacking Soult, while Cuesta should keep Victor in check, was one which could have originated only in a mind of the

CHAP. VII. 1809.

highest energy and vigour. All these things are admirable; yet it may be safely asserted, that but a small part of Lord Wellington's military reputation, will be found eventually to rest on the campaign of Talavera.

CHAPTER VIII.

OPERATIONS OF THE SPANISH ARMIES.

THE utter incapacity of Cuesta had been strongly represented to the Spanish government, and that officer was at length removed from his command. He was a man of strong passions and of narrow mind, who too often mistook rashness for courage, obstinacy for firmness, and procrastination for prudence. Buoyed up under every reverse by the most overweening self-confidence, he was disqualified, by narrow bigotry of opinion, from profiting even by the dear-bought lessons of experience. His measures uniformly failed, because they were uniformly adopted on the dictates of temporary impulse, rather than of any patient calculation of probabilities. Yet with all his defects, Cuesta was a man of upright intentions

CHAP. VIII. 1809. October.

and untarnished honour. While too many of his associates were disposed to truckle to the usurper, Cuesta trod steadily in the path of patriotism and honour. He adhered to the cause of his country through every misfortune; and the sincerity of the zeal with which he laboured to promote its success, has never, we believe, been questioned by friend or enemy.

On the retirement of Cuesta, the command of his army was assumed by General Eguia, who, in conjunction with Vanegas, could bring into the field an army of about fifty thousand men. Blake, after his defeat at Belchite, had only been able to re-assemble a corps of about six thousand men, with which his main object was to relieve Gerona. There were in Gallicia about fifteen thousand men, under Noronha, but without cavalry or artillery. The Duke del Parque had nine thousand, at Ciudad Rodrigo.

Such was the disposition and strength of the Spanish armies. The disposable force of the French amounted to about one hundred and twenty-five thousand men, exclusive of garrisons. Of these about thirty-five thousand were occupied in Arragon and Catalonia; the remainder were in the two Castilles and Estramadura.

Ney's head-quarters were at Salamanca; and part of his corps was stationed at Ledesma and Alba de Tormes. Soult's were at Placentia; and he occupied Coria, Galesteo, and the banks of the Tietar and the Tagus, to the bridge of Arzobisbo. The corps of Mortier was at Talavera, Oropesa, and Naval Moral. Victor's head-quarters were at Toledo, his advanced posts at Daymiel. The corps of Sebastiani extended from Aranjuez to Alcala. Marshal Jourdan had been recalled, and Soult appointed Major-General of the armies. This appointment gave offence to Ney, who, in consequence, solicited leave to quit the army; and the command of his corps was assumed by General Marchand.

It was in this state of things, when the enemy had a force of above seventy thousand men immediately disposable for its defence, that the Junta adopted the insane project of advancing on Madrid, with the armies of Vanegas and Eguia. The former leader had been superseded by General Arisaigo, a very young man, without talent or experience; and to this person the command of this perilous enterprize was entrusted. In Arisaigo the Supreme Junta calculated on finding a submissive instrument of their schemes; and by

CHAP. VIII 1809. November.

these wretched calculators it was thought possible, by a rapid advance, to gain possession of the capital, and thus to strike a signal blow, by which the grasp of the invader would at once be loosened.

Without any communication with Lord Wellington, therefore, and without concerting any combined movement with the other armies, Arisaigo put his force in motion against the capital. The French were unprepared for the suddenness of this advance; and Latour Maubourg, who commanded a considerable body of horse at Madrilejos, on learning that the Spaniards were entering the town, with difficulty effected his escape. The Spanish army were successful in several skirmishes; and on the sixteenth of

Nov. 16.

November Arisaigo reached Santa Cruz de la Zorza, where he encamped his army on the heights.

On receiving intelligence of this movement, Joseph Buonaparte immediately advanced with the main body of his forces to bring the enemy to battle. In order to deceive the Spanish General, the French at first made demonstrations of acting only on the defensive; but Arisaigo, learning that a large force

had assembled at Toledo, on his flank, became alarmed at the peril of his situation, and marched towards Ocana, in order to occupy the great road from Seville to Aranjuez. In the neighbourhood of that town he was attacked on the day following, by the army under Joseph.

Arisaigo waited his approach in a position of which the town of Ocana formed the centre. The country being flat, his wings were without support, the right terminating in an olive-grove, the left extending across the road from Aranjuez. The town was covered by a ravine which ran along its front. The artillery, consisting of about sixty pieces, was chiefly disposed in batteries on the right and left; and the cavalry were formed in a body, a little in advance of the right flank. The second line was posted so near to the first, that, in case of the latter being thrown into disorder, there was no room for it to rally.

About ten o'clock the French commenced their attack. A column, under General Leval, supported by artillery, advanced on the right flank of the Spaniards.

They were received with so heavy a fire, that Leval's division, in attempting to deploy, fell

CHAP. VIII 1809. November

into confusion, and two pieces of artillery were dismounted. At this critical moment, a division in reserve was ordered to advance through the intervals of the discomfited columns, and form line in front of them. This was immediately done, and a change soon took place in the fortune of the day. The cavalry, under Sebastiani charged, and the whole right wing of the Spaniards at once went down.

The left wing, however, was untouched, and an able General might yet have secured a retreat. But Arisaigo, utterly confounded, quitted the field, desiring this portion of the army to follow him. Lord Macduff, who was present in the action, entreated the second in command to assume the direction; but the French cavalry broke through the centre, and the rout became complete. The surrounding county was flat and open to the action of cavalry, which vigorously pursued the fugitives, and cut them down on all sides. Victor, whose corps came up at the conclusion of the action, continued the pursuit all night. In this unfortunate battle the Spaniards lost all their baggage and artillery, and about thirty thousand stand of arms. The number of killed and wounded was about four thousand. Eigh-

teen thousand were made prisoners; and, by many, the number has been estimated still higher. The loss of the victors amounted only to seventeen hundred. CHAP. VIII 1809. November.

Lamentable, in every point of view, as this defeat unquestionably was, it carried with it disgrace rather to the General than the troops which he commanded. The latter displayed courage; and the right wing received the onset of the French with firmness and resolution. The artillery was excellently served; and several regiments shewed an unshaken front to the enemy, when above half their number had fallen. Had the army, thus sacrificed, been reserved for defence of the Sierra Morena, Andalusia would probably have been rescued from the grasp of the enemy. But thus it was, by ignorance, obstinacy, and mismanagement, that the hopes of Spain were blighted, and the blood of her sons unprofitably wasted.

This disastrous battle, which, at a blow, laid open the southern provinces, was speedily followed by another scarcely less ruinous. The Duke del Parque, with an army augmented by recent levies to about twenty thousand men, had, for some time back, kept his ground in the neigh-

CHAP. VIII

1809.

bourhood of Ciudad Rodrigo, where, being joined by Sir Robert Wilson, he had succeeded in causing great annoyance to the enemy. In the middle of October, General Marchand advanced against this army, with the view of bringing it to action, and found it strongly posted near Tamames. The force of Marchand consisted of ten thousand foot, twelve hundred cavalry, and fourteen pieces of cannon. Despising his opponents, who enjoyed all advantages of ground, he attacked them with an imprudent impetuosity, which terminated in the defeat of his army. After this engagement, in which he lost about three thousand men, Marchand retreated on Salamanca. There he was followed by the Duke, and Marchand withdrew his force across the Douro.

October.

For some time after this event, the Spanish army remained inactive at Salamanca; and the defeated corps having received reinforcements, again advanced, under General Kellerman, to retrieve its disaster. The Duke del Parque, elated by victory, determined on again standing the hazard of a battle. It took place near Alba de Tormes. The Spaniards were driven from the high ground which they occupied, but retreated on Tamames in tolerable order. On the following

November.

Nov. 17.

morning, when within two leagues of that town, a small body of French horse came up, and made a charge on the rear. The whole army then fell into confusion, and dispersed. Fortunately, the enemy were not near enough for immediate pursuit; and, on reaching the Pena de Francia, in that secure position a considerable body of the fugitives were collected. CHAP. VII 1809. November

By this victory, the French were enabled, without further obstacle, to direct their views against Ciudad Rodrigo, and threaten Portugal. Lord Wellington, in consequence, removed his army from their unhealthy station in the neighbourhood of Badajos; and crossing the Tagus, fixed his head-quarters at Vizeu.

While the Supreme Junta were wasting the national resources in ill-concerted endeavours to regain possession of the capital, the defence of Catalonia was left to the unaided efforts of its inhabitants. A French fleet had succeeded in escaping the English squadron, and in re-victualing Barcelona. This done, preparations were set on foot for the siege of Gerona. General Reille who was to have commanded the besieging army, was at this period superseded by General Verdier. The force under St. Cyr, which

CHAP. VIII 1809. May.

was destined to act as a corps of observation, occupied the fertile country around Vich.

On the sixth of May, the besiegers appeared before Gerona; and taking possession of the heights of Casa Roca, and Costarroja, began to form their lines without opposition. The garrison of the city, which amounted only to three thousand four hundred men, was commanded by Don Mariano Alvarez; and the inhabitants, encouraged by having twice driven the enemy from their walls, were again prepared to signalize their patriotism by a strenuous and unshrinking defence.

Since the period of the former siege, the fortifications of the place had been considerably strengthened. The three advanced redoubts, of which the enemy, in eighteen hundred and eight, had gained easy possession, were now in a complete state of defence; and much labour had been expended in increasing the security of the other works.

When the lines were completed, a summons was sent into the city, exhorting Alvarez to avoid the evils which could not fail to result from resistance. All terms, however, were rejected, and the siege went on.

On the night of the thirteenth of June, the bombardment commenced. This event had not been unprovided for by the inhabitants. The alarm sounded; and the women, the aged, and the children, sought refuge in cellars, and other places of comparative security, which had been prepared for their reception. On the seventeenth, an ill-judged sally was made by the besieged, which, though successful, was yet attended by a loss of life which more than counterbalanced the benefit it produced.

June.

Jun. 17.

The bombardment continued, and spread devastation through the buildings of the city. Several hospitals were destroyed; and the difficulty of providing accommodation for the sick and wounded, became daily greater. Fever and disease broke out among the inhabitants, yet their spirit remained firm and unbroken.

In the meanwhile, St. Cyr, who had hitherto remained in his position near Vich, moved his head-quarters to Caldas de Malavella, in order to prevent succours being thrown into Gerona; and his army occupied a line, extending from the Ona to San Feliu de Guixols, from which place the Spaniards, after an obstinate resistance, were driven on the twen-

Jun. 21.

CHAP. VIII

1809.

ty-first. While thus stationed, the General received official intelligence that Marshal Au-

June. gerau was about to supersede him in the command of the seventh corps; and this circumstance contributed to deprive him of the influence which he would otherwise naturally have exerted on the operations of the siege. He objected to the manner in which Verdier had conducted his advances against the town, and his neglect of many salutary precautions. But his opinions were disregarded, and Verdier continued to prosecute the siege, in full expectation of speedily becoming master of the place.

July. The redoubts in advance of Mont Jouy, were carried by assault, and with a facility which tended to increase the contempt with which the French army regarded their opponents. Emboldened by this success, they determined to assault a breach which a battery of twenty guns had opened in one of the bastions of Mont Jouy.

Jul. 4. The attack was made in the night of the fourth of July, and terminated in the complete repulse of the assailants.

During the three following days an incessant fire was kept up on the breach; and on the

Jul. 8. eighth, it was again assaulted. The French

columns were received with a fire, so well directed and destructive, that, after several ineffectual efforts, the troops were withdrawn in confusion, with the loss of eleven hundred of their number. CHAP. VIII 1809. August.

From this time forward the siege was conducted with greater prudence. Batteries were opened on three different sides of the fort, and every precaution was adopted to ensure success. An entire month passed in the dispute of a ravelin, which, when at length carried by the enemy, was found untenable from being exposed to the musquetry from the fort.

With the contests for possession of the ravelin personal conflict ceased between the garrison of Mont Jouy and the besiegers. Though the defences were daily suffering by the enemy's mines and artillery, yet the fort was not abandoned till the walls had been nearly levelled with the ground, and the whole guns had been silenced. In this situation, the ruins were resigned to the enemy; and on the night of the eleventh of August, the garrison effected its retreat. Aug. 11.

In defence of the town an equal share of resolution and gallantry was displayed. By the

CHAP. VIII surrender of Mont Jouy, the French were enabled to throw up works nearer to the *enceinte*, and a tremendous fire was opened from their numerous batteries.

1809. August.

Towards the end of August, several breaches had been made, and the garrison was greatly reduced by the casualties of war and disease. The hospitals were already crowded, and unable to contain the patients whose situation demanded admission. The ravages of the fever were hourly increasing, and the want of provisions began to be severely felt. Yet no proposal of surrender was heard in the city. The determination of all ranks to resist the enemy to the last extremity remained unshaken by calamity.

At this critical period, Blake having, by a series of skilful manœuvres, succeeded in deceiving St. Cyr as to his intentions, was enabled to throw three thousand of his army, with a supply of provisions, into the city. By this timely reinforcement the spirits of the garrison were raised; and the besiegers, from a want of ammunition, were compelled for a time to suspend their operations. The interval thus afforded was employed in strengthening and repairing the dilapidations of the place.

Sep. 1.

On receiving the expected supplies, the besiegers redoubled their quantity of fire, and on the eighteenth of September three breaches were declared practicable. On the day following, the assault was made, and the struggle, which was long and severe, at length terminated in favour of the garrison. The French were repulsed in all their efforts, and having suffered great loss, were at length withdrawn in disorder.

September. Sep. 19.

The besiegers were dispirited by this signal defeat of their greatest effort. It was determined to convert the siege into a blockade, and to reduce those by famine whom they could not conquer by the sword. This was done. The situation of the garrison and the inhabitants of the city, was one of accumulating suffering. Famine was in their dwellings. The supply of corn was small, and the mules and horses were slaughtered at the shambles. The fever, which the heats of summer had rendered more virulent and fatal, was raging in its fury, and other forms of disease, scarcely less destructive, assailed those whom the pestilence had spared.

It is not in the breach or on the battle-field,—it is not amid the inspiriting and glorious accompaniments of hostile struggle, where death

CHAP. VIII comes suddenly if he comes at all, and the heart which panted for victory, and the lips which shouted triumph, in a moment become mute and motionless,—it is not in such circumstances that the courage of the human soul is most severely tested. In Gerona, the period of active struggle had passed away. All that now remained to its inhabitants, was to exert that calm and passive fortitude, that firmness of endurance, which shrinks from no suffering which duty demanded they should encounter. This highest, rarest, and noblest description of courage, was not wanting in the Geronans. Amid famine and pestilence they remained unshaken, hoping the best, yet prepared to brave the worst; looking for succour, but determined on resistance.

1809. September.

Relief—enough only to prolong their sufferings—came. General O'Donnel, with one hundred and sixty mules loaded with provisions, succeeded, on the side of Bispal, in breaking through the enemy and reaching the town. The same officer, by a bold and skilful manœuvre, subsequently succeeded in passing the besieging army, and retreating with his troops.

Oct. 13.

The joy of the inhabitants at this seasonable relief was at first great. It raised hopes of

support from without, which were not realized. Marshal Augerau had assumed the command of the besieging army. Convoys of provisions arrived from France, accompanied by a large reinforcement of troops; and a detachment which had been sent against Hostalrich, drove the Spaniards from the town, and became masters of the large magazines which had been formed there. CHAP. VII. 1809. October.

The hope of external relief no longer existed in the city. A fearful mortality was raging within its walls. The burial-places were choked with corpses, and the deaths sometimes amounted even to seventy a day. Augerau straitened the blockade, and persevered in bombarding the city. He likewise sent letters into the city, to communicate his victory at Hostalrich, the defeat of Blake's army, and the peace with Austria. With a humanity highly honourable, he even offered to grant an armistice for a month, and suffer supplies immediately to enter the city, provided Alvarez would capitulate at the expiration of that period, should the city not be relieved.

The Geronans, however, were prepared to bear all, and would not, for the sake of shortening their own sufferings, consent to aught that might

CHAP. VIII injure their country. They knew that, should they accept the proposal of Augerau, a large proportion of the besieging army would become disposable for other operations. The offer, therefore, was declined. The records of history present few instances of more pure and memorable heroism.

1809. November.

Notwithstanding the sufferings of the besieged, few cases occurred of desertion. But in one instance ten officers—two of whom were of noble birth—went over to the enemy. At length, however, suffering reached such a pitch, that many of the inhabitants, determined to risk death in the field rather than await his slow approach in the city, attempted to escape through the enemy's lines, and in some instances succeeded.

Towards the end of November, Samaniego, the chief surgeon to the garrison, delivered a report to Alvarez on the state of health in the city. Aware of the nature of its contents, Alvarez directed Samaniego to read it, observing, "This paper will inform posterity of our sufferings—should there be none left to recount them."

Nov. 29.

The report was a dreadful one. In the whole city there did not remain a single house unin-

jured by the bombardment. The people bur- CHAP. VI
rowed in cellars, vaults, and crevices of the ruins. 1809.
The water stagnated in the streets which were November
broken up. The sick were frequently killed in the hospitals. The dead bodies, which lay rotting in holes amid the ruins, poisoned the atmosphere. Even vegetation was affected by it. Trees withered in the gardens, and esculents refused to grow. Within three weeks five hundred of the garrison had died in the hospitals. The sick lay upon the ground without beds, and almost without food. Nearly the whole fuel and provisions had been exhausted. "If by these sacrifices," concluded Samaniego, "worthy to be the admiration of history,—and if by consummating them with the lives of those of us who by the will of Providence have survived our comrades, the liberty of our country can be secured, happy shall we be in the bosom of eternity, and in the memory of all good men, and happy will our children be among their fellow countrymen."

The breaches, which ten weeks before had been assaulted, were still open; and the besiegers having learned that the ammunition of the place was exhausted, determined on bolder

CHAP. VIII operations. All the outworks were carried, and a gallant sally of the garrison, though successful did not materially amend their situation.

1809. December.

The besiegers had how advanced close to the walls, the breaches were open, and the enemy were evidently preparing for another assault.

Dec. 4. In this state of things, the brave Alvarez became smitten with the prevailing epidemic. He resigned the command to Don Julian De Bolivar, who summoned a council to determine what measures should be adopted in the extremity to which the city had been reduced.

The meeting was of opinion that further resistance was hopeless, and it was resolved to

Dec. 10. treat for a capitulation. Marshal Augerau granted honourable terms. The garrison were to march out with the honours of war, and be sent prisoners into France, to be exchanged as soon as possible for an equal number of French prisoners then detained at Majorca, and other places. None but those who ranked as soldiers were to be considered prisoners. The French army were not to be quartered on the inhabitants. The public records of the city were neither to be removed nor destroyed. The inhabitants were to be at liberty to quit Gerona, taking

with them their property. The heroic Alvarez was to be allowed to choose any place of residence on the French frontier. He afterwards retired to Figueras, where he died. CHAP. VIII 1809. December.

When the garrison, reduced by famine and disease, marched out, in presence of the French army, their shrunken forms, their glazed and hollow eyes, their wan and meagre countenances, excited even the compassion of their enemies. On entering the city, it was found that most of the guns had been fired so often as to have become useless. Brass itself, observed Samaniego, had given way before the constancy of the Geronans. It may be added, that brass will be found less durable than the tribute which shall be paid, by all noble and generous spirits, to the heroism and devotion of these intrepid patriots.

After the battle of Ocana, the Central Junta displayed little of that energy which, on former occasions, had contributed to bear them through increasing difficulties. They endeavoured to conceal from the nation the full extent of their misfortunes. The discovery of a conspiracy for a change of government contributed yet more to their alarm. They knew themselves to have

CHAP. VIII 1809. December.

become unpopular with the nation. Libels were poured forth on them in all quarters; and the chief efforts of the Junta were directed rather to the maintenance of their own precarious authority, than to any measures of effective resistance to the enemy.

Yet for such measures the time imperatively called. The enemy threatened Andalusia; and it was evident that by nothing but a rapid and vigorous concentration of the national efforts could his projects be successfully opposed. Under these circumstances, the Junta issued proclamations to the people, couched in the same high tone of chivalrous patriotism which had formerly produced so animating an effect. But it was already apparent that the nation had lost confidence in the government. The Provincial Juntas had in many places resumed their authority; and Spain was probably on the verge of relapsing into the state of confusion from which the formation of the Central Junta had delivered it, when the progress of the enemy put a stop to these intestine dissensions.

So unpopular indeed had the Junta become, that no officer of reputation would consent to serve under them. In Gallicia, the Conde de

Noronha had already reared the standard of rebellion. Romana, to whom the chief command of the armies had been offered, declined its acceptance. The Duke del Albuquerque, who commanded a corps of about twelve thousand in Estramadura, was an object of fear and jealousy to the Junta. Castanos was in disgrace at Algesiras; and the chief command in Andalusia, at a crisis so important, was, almost from necessity, intrusted to the imbecile Arisaigo. Worse placed it could not be.

CHAPTER IX.

OPERATIONS IN ANDALUSIA.

CHAP. IX. 1810. THE year had closed in Spain triumphantly for the French arms, as it had commenced. The Spanish armies had sustained a series of unparalleled defeats. The British had retired into Portugal; and the efforts of Lord Wellington were, for the present, limited to the defence of that kingdom. England had wasted her resources in a fruitless and ill-judged expedition to the Isle of Walcheren, where disease had done the work of the sword. A triumphant peace had been concluded with Austria; and the whole of the immense forces of the French empire were thus disposable for the reduction of Spain.

At Paris, Napoleon, in a speech to the senate,

recounted the triumphs of the year, and intimated his intention of returning to Spain, to complete the conquest already almost achieved. "When I shall shew myself beyond the Pyrenees," said he, in metaphor somewhat staled by frequent repetition, "the frightened Leopard will fly to the ocean to avoid shame, defeat, and death. The triumph of my arms will be the triumph of the genius of good over that of evil,—of moderation, order, and morality, over civil war, anarchy, and the evil passions!"

The war minister reported, that, of the conscriptions already decreed, there still remained eighty thousand men uncalled into service. Of these, thirty-six thousand were to be immediately embodied. Thirty thousand men, collected at Bayonne, were ready to repair the casualties which had diminished the French armies in Spain; and an additional force of twenty-five thousand, raised from the conscription of the year following, would be at the disposal of the Emperor.

Such was the threatening aspect of affairs at the commencement of eighteen hundred and ten. Yet Lord Wellington did not despair of the cause in which he had embarked. When

CHAP. IX. 1810.

he entered Spain, but a few months before, he had done so in co-operation with an army of considerable strength, against a comparatively small and extended body of the enemy. Since that period, the Spanish armies had been routed and dispersed; and, whatever ideas he might have previously formed, it was now evident, that neither the talents of their leaders, nor the character of the troops, gave any prospect of vigorous and effective resistance to the progress of the enemy. But Lord Wellington likewise knew, that the security of Spain did not depend on the conduct of her armies,—that an indomitable spirit of hostility was abroad among her people,—that a desultory but destructive war was carrying on in all her provinces,—and that the expense of life, at which the French maintained their hold on the country, was one which could not fail gradually to enfeeble the invaders, and call for a succession of efforts, of such magnitude, as France, in the precarious state of Europe, might soon be unable to support.

In the meantime, it was obvious that defensive war was the only one which could be waged with any prospect of success. It was

the policy of England to protract the contest; to lead the enemy to divide his forces by distracting his attention, and thus to subject him to the full operation of that petty but pervading hostility which was ever wasting his numbers. For the present, therefore, Lord Wellington determined to confine his efforts to the defence of Portugal, yet to stand prepared on the occurrence of more favourable circumstances, again to widen the sphere of his operations, and advance into Spain.

On crossing the Tagus, he moved his head-quarters to Vizeu; and the army went into cantonments, extending from Coimbra to Pinhel, while the corps of General Hill remained at Abrantes and its neighbourhood. In this position, the troops remained for some time inactive, in order to recover the effects of the preceding campaign, and the sickness which had been engendered by the unhealthy station to which they had subsequently removed.

At this period, Marshal Soult, with an army of about fifty thousand men, was preparing to advance into Andalusia. The Junta, blind to the approaching danger, felt secure that the giant range of the Sierra Morena

CHAP. IX. 1810. January. would oppose an impenetrable barrier to the progress of the enemy. The passes of these mountains had been fortified with care, and a force of about twenty thousand men, under Arisaigo, was posted for their defence. But on the

Jan. 20. twentieth of January, the pass of Despena Perros was forced, with but little resistance from the troops, whose spirit was depressed by the remembrance of Ocana. In order to distract the attention of Arisago, Soult divided his army into three columns, which advanced simultaneously on the three principal *debouchés* of the Sierra. The right, under Victor, by Almaden; the centre, under Mortier, by the road from Madrid; the left, under Sebastiani, by Villa Nueva. Several mines had been placed by the Spaniards at the narrow parts of the defile, but the explosion of these produced little effect. On the twenty-first, Soult's head-quar-

Jan. 29. ters were at Baylen; and, on the twenty-ninth, the corps of Victor effected its junction with the army before Seville.

In Seville—where, till now, nothing had been heard but the sound of presumptuous boasting—all was confusion. The Junta fled to Cadiz; no measures had been taken to put the

city in a condition for effective resistance; and, after a negotiation of two days, it surrendered. On the thirty-first, Seville opened her gates, and the intrusive monarch made his triumphal entry on the same day. The French thus became masters of nearly two hundred pieces of serviceable cannon, of immense magazines, and of the great cannon foundry, which was left uninjured.

In truth, the resistance offered in Andalusia to the progress of the French arms was so slight, as to lead Joseph to believe that the spirit of the people had at length been effectually humbled. Jaen, which boasted every preparation for defence, submitted, without a struggle, to Sebastiani. Granada followed the disgraceful example, after an impotent attempt to check the progress of the enemy by Arisaigo. A feeble effort was subsequently made in defence of Malaga, but this too failed; and on the fifth of February, the French took possession of the city.

Feb. 5.

At Seville the army remained for two days inactive, when a corps, under Mortier, was detached into Estramadura, for the reduction of Badajos, and Victor was directed to march on

CHAP. IX. 1810. February.

Cadiz. Had the latter been at once pushed forward, with that celerity of movement for which the French army is generally remarkable, and to which it has been indebted for many of its most splendid successes, there can exist little doubt that Cadiz would have fallen. The city, in truth, was utterly unprepared for attack; the garrison was insufficient to man the works, and there were not a thousand men in the Isla de Leon. The governor, General Vanegas, was unpopular and distrusted; he accordingly resigned his authority, and a Junta of eighteen householders was elected by ballot to govern the city.

In such circumstances was it, that Cadiz was saved from her impending danger by the vigour and promptitude of the Duke del Albuquerque. That General, placing little faith in the talent and prudence of the Supreme Junta, no sooner received intelligence that the French had passed the Morena, than, disregarding the orders of the Junta, who directed him to repair to Cordova, he marched on Cadiz with the greatest rapidity, and threw himself into the

Feb. 4. Isla de Leon, with a body of about eight thousand men, in time to barricade the bridge of Zuazo before the head of Victor's column came

up. Thus was Cadiz saved, and Spain spared from a misfortune which could not but have been followed by the most disastrous consequences. CHAP. IX. 1810. February.

The unpopularity of the Supreme Junta had now reached its height. On their arrival in Cadiz, they attempted to resume their authority; but neither the Local Junta, nor the army, nor the populace would obey their decrees. The personal safety of its members was even endangered by the violence of the mob; and, making a merit of necessity, the Junta at length resigned the shadow of that power which in reality they had long ceased to possess. A Council* of Regency, consisting of five members, was appointed to wield the reins of authority till the Cortes should be assembled; and the Junta closed their career by issuing a farewell address to the people, claiming credit, amid all their misfortunes, for purity of intention, and unshaken devotion to their country.

* The Council consisted of the following members:—Don Pedro de Quevedo y Quintana, Bishop of Orense; Don Antonio de Ascano; General Castanos; Don Francisco de Saavedra, late President of the Junta of Seville; and Don Esteban Fernandez de Leon, who was afterwards changed for Don Miguel de Lardizabel.

CHAP. IX. 1810. February.

Let this much be granted them:—Let it not be assumed, because deficient in intellect, that they were likewise corrupt in heart. If the Junta partook largely of the defects of the national character, they partook also of its virtues. Their career was unmarked by any base truckling or subserviency to the enemies of their country. Amid the storm of misfortune they had stood unbending and erect, animating their countrymen by their voice, and urging them to renewed efforts. The task of governing the nation at so arduous a crisis was one for which they were little qualified by knowledge, talent, or experience. But their intentions were honest; and the integrity of but few of its members has ever been considered liable to suspicion.

Even the resignation of their authority did not protect the members of the Junta from persecution. The voice of the whole nation was against them; they were treated as criminals. The Council of Castile, which had repeatedly temporized with the intruder, declared their power to have been a violent and unconstitutional usurpation. The mob accused them of peculating the public money; and to gratify the

public appetite for vengeance, some of the more obnoxious were imprisoned; and the rest—including the respectable Jovellanos—were banished to the provinces, and placed in a state of *surveillance* by the local authorities. CHAP. IX. 1810. March.

Disappointed by the activity of the Duke del Albuquerque, in the hope of gaining Cadiz, the French for some months remained in possession of the chief cities of Andalusia, yet subject to continual losses and annoyance from the bands of Guerilla smugglers which abounded in the mountains. In the meantime, efforts were made by Great Britain, to assist the patriots in defending the Isla de Leon and Cadiz. Supplies of all sorts were liberally sent from Gibraltar, and about six or seven thousand British and Portuguese troops, under Lieutenant-General Graham, were landed on the Island.

The Island or Isla de Leon, is somewhat triangular in form, bounded on two sides by the sea, and on the third by the Santi Petri river, of considerable depth, and varying in breadth from eighty to one hundred and fifty yards. This side is strongly fortified, and is besides naturally strong. The Santi Petri can be crossed only by the bridge of Zuazo, flanked by batteries,

CHAP. IX. 1810. and connected with the mainland by a causeway, leading across a broad and swampy marsh, by which the channel of the river is almost everywhere bounded. There are two towns on the Isla de Leon; one which bears the same name, containing about forty thousand inhabitants; and another called San Carlos, consisting almost entirely of barracks and other government buildings.

At the extremity of a long and narrow isthmus projecting from this island towards the north of the bay, stands the city of Cadiz. The portion of the sea enclosed within this isthmus, the Isla, and the mainland, constitutes the harbour of Cadiz, which, opposite to the city, is about three miles broad. Cadiz is on three sides washed by the sea, and is strongly fortified on all. By land it can be approached only from the Isla de Leon, and along the narrow isthmus already mentioned, for defence of which, forts and batteries of great strength had been erected. When an enemy should have surmounted these, he would still find himself opposed by a regular front of fortification, extending from sea to sea, on which no expense or labour had been spared.

The first care of Marshal Soult was to occupy all the outlets from the Isla, and to reduce Fort Matagorda, a small insular work, which was occupied by a detachment of British, and by means of which he would be enabled to annoy the shipping in harbour. The heavy fire of his artillery soon rendered the work untenable, and on the twenty-third of April the garrison was withdrawn by the boats of the squadron under Admiral Purvis. Apr. 23.

In Cadiz, dissention had unfortunately broken out between the Duke del Albuquerque, who had been appointed Governor, the Regency, and the Local Junta. The first in his exertions to strengthen the fortifications of the place, was not seconded either by the people or the authorities. The inhabitants remained indolent and lethargic spectators of the labours in which the garrison were engaged. The Junta would do nothing to supply the necessities of the troops, and the time and energies which should have been devoted to their high and important duties, was wasted in frivolous contentions with Albuquerque and the Council of Regency. The former, utterly disgusted, at length resigned the command, and quitted a scene where his February.

CHAP. IX. endeavours could no longer be useful, to assume the functions of Ambassador to England.

1810. April. Notwithstanding the apathy by which on all hands he was surrounded, Sir Thomas Graham did everything which his vigorous mind could suggest to add still greater security to the defences of Cadiz. A canal was cut across the isthmus which connects it with the Isla. The works along the river Santi Petri were improved, and new ones thrown up, and the river frontier of the island soon presented a front of almost unassailable strength. The French on their side were not idle. They fortified the towns of Rota, Puerto Real, Puerto Sta. Maria, and Chiclana; formed entrenched camps in the intervals between them; and at the point of Trocadero established batteries, from whence by means of huge mortars, constructed for the purpose at the cannon foundry of Seville, they succeeded in throwing shells into the city. In this immense line of batteries, extending from Rota to the mouth of the Santi Petri, the enemy had upwards of three hundred pieces of cannon.

In the meantime, the country was scoured by moveable columns of the enemy, which, though they frequently suffered severely from the arm-

ed bands of smugglers which haunted the moun- CHAP. IX.
tains, succeeded in quelling all attempt at insur- 1810.
rection, and in establishing the ascendancy of May.
French dominion throughout the southern provinces.

At this period, a new and unheard of principle of war was attempted to be established by the French leaders. It was declared by Marshal Soult, in a public edict, that none but regular armies had a right to defend their towns, their houses, and their families, from violence and plunder; and that as no legitimate Spanish army could exist but that of his Catholic Majesty, Joseph Napoleon, all bodies of armed Spaniards, of whatever number or description, which existed in the provinces, should be treated as banditti, whose object was robbery and murder. Every individual taken in arms was immediately to be condemned and shot, and his body exposed on the highway.*

* The utter and disgraceful recklessness of national law displayed by the French throughout the war in Spain, may here receive another corroboration. Prisoners of war were actually tried by a military tribunal, and put to death, on the simple charge of attempting to escape. Lest this most atrocious fact should not otherwise gain credit, the following extracts from

CHAP. IX. 1810. May.

When it was discovered by the Regency that this most infamous decree was actually carried into effect, they reprinted it with a counter decree, in French and Spanish, declaring, that in these times every Spaniard, capable of bearing arms, was a soldier; and ordaining, that for every person who should be murdered by the enemy, the first three Frenchmen taken in arms should be hanged; three should also be executed for every house burned, and three for every one who should perish in the flames. Soult himself they declared unworthy of the

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orders on this subject are given. The originals are in the possession of Lord Wellington.

"(General Beliard. Madrid, 27 Novembre.)—L'intention du Roi est qu'il soit formé à Madrid une commission militaire, composée de sept membres, par-devant laquelle vous ferez traduire les prisonniers de guerre. Les jugemens de la commission emporteront la peine de mort, et seront sans appel."

"(General Solignac. 5 Decembre.)—Il m'a été rendu compte que quelques prisonniers s'étaient échappés dans la marche. Faites les rechercher, et ordonnez à l'égard de ceux qui seront pris, qu'on met en exécution l'ordre du 27 Novembre."

"(Ministre de la Guerre à Paris. 14 Decembre.)—Les Espagnols ont tant de facilité pour se deguiser, et ensuite pour se dérober à la surveillance, que malgré la sévérité qu'on exerce envers eux, on n'est pas toujours assuré de les garder, quoiqu'ils soient prévenus que les tentatives pour s'évader, leur font encourir la peine capitale, et que des nombreux exemples aient été faits."—*Campaign of* 1809.

law of nations till this decree had been repealed; and orders were issued that, if taken, he should be treated like a common robber.

In the bands of Guerillas, which now existed in every mountainous district of the country, the Regency found willing agents in the execution of their retributive enactments. Few acts of outrage on the part of the enemy escaped without reprisal. In one instance, a Guerilla leader hung several Frenchmen on the trees bordering the high road near Madrid, in retaliation for several of his own men, whom the invaders had put to death; and made known his intention of treating in a similar manner all the superior officers who should fall into his power. Thus did blood beget blood, and cruelty on the one side generate exasperation on the other. Of this truth most of the French leaders, by degrees, became convinced; and, alarmed at the prospect before them, the system of extermination was happily allowed to sink into desuetude.

In the state of feeling which existed, however, between the hostile parties, it was impossible but that acts of cruelty and vengeance should take place on both sides. Indignant at the losses they sustained from the Guerillas, many indivi-

CHAP. IX. 1810.

duals were summarily put to death by the French, on mere suspicion of being connected with those who annoyed them by a warfare so destructive and pertinacious. Yet it is but justice to record, that the measures we have just detailed, which cannot fail to cast a deep shadow of ignominy on those by whom they were projected or enforced, are in no degree understood to have emanated from him, whose regal authority they were intended to establish. Joseph, constitutionally mild, disapproved of all acts of gratuitous violence and bloodshed. But his personal influence, even in the affairs of his own kingdom, was small. The French commanders knew themselves to be amenable to a higher power, and were solely guided in their policy by its influence and control. The ministers of Joseph, aware that his amiable and placid character was appreciated by the people, were not without hopes, that he might eventually acquire a place in their affections, when the storm of resistance should have passed. But this expectation was never realized. Joseph, though not hated, was the object of popular derision. His indolence, his addiction to the pleasures of the table, his want of military qualities,

and his low origin, were all unfavourable to his acquiring any personal favour among a people so proud, so acute, and so haughty as the Spaniards. The higher and better qualities by which his character was honourably distinguished were seldom called into public and apparent action; and Joseph, to the end of his career as a monarch, remained to the Spanish nation an object of unmitigated contempt.* CHAP. IX. 1810.

After the defeat of Blake at Belchite, Suchet established his head-quarters at Zaragoza, and busied himself in preparations for the vigorous prosecution of the war. He established maga-

* Though somewhat out of place, the following passage from a letter to Napoleon, written in March, 1812, and which was intercepted by the capture of a convoy in the defile of Salinas, will exhibit the character of Joseph in a better light than that in which it has generally been regarded:—

"SIRE,—Les evenemens ont trompé mes esperances; je n'ai fait aucun bien, et je n'ai pas l'espoir d'en faire. Je prie donc V. M. de me permettre de deposer entre ses mains, les droits qu'elle daigna me transmettre, sur la couronne d'Espagne il y a quatre ans. Je n'ai jamais eu d'autre but en l'acceptant, que celui de faire le bonheur de cette monarchie. Cela n'est point en mon pouvoir."

Let it be remembered, that when Joseph signed this honourable renunciation of the crown, Spain was occupied by a numerous and triumphant army; and that the Russian campaign, by which the throne of Napoleon was shaken to its base, had not yet commenced.—*Memoires du General Hugo.*

CHAP. IX. 1810.

zines of all sorts, and disposed his army so as at once to maintain his communication with France, and to keep in check the numerous bands which had lately been strongly reinforced by the fugitives from Belchite. "Thus it was," says a French writer, "that the Spaniards, always beaten but never subdued, animated by a courage which misfortune could not depress, because founded on the love of country, opposed to the French throughout the whole Peninsula, but especially in Arragon and Catalonia, the same resistance which their gallant ancestors had offered to the Romans, to the Goths, and to the Moors,—to Charlemagne, and Louis the Fourteenth." Thus it was, too, that even in defeat were sown the dragon's teeth, which afterwards sprung up into armed men.

Victoires et Conquetes.

The difficulty of Suchet's situation was considerable. The Guerilla bands were in possession of all the valleys in the mountainous districts. Detachments of his army were continually cut off. His couriers and convoys of provisions were intercepted; the country was intimidated, and those who would willingly have remained neutral in the struggle, were forced by threats to join their countrymen in arms. The

Memoires de Suchet.

French army were kept in a state of continual vigilance and alarm. Partial engagements took place on all hands, nor was it till the month of November that even the semblance of tranquillity could be restored. All the towns and strong places were then occupied by the French, and Suchet levied heavy contributions on the whole province.

Navarre too was far from tranquil, and Suchet next directed his efforts to the pacification of that kingdom. He accordingly repaired to Pampeluna, and rectified many of the abuses, which had been suffered to grow up under the administration of the Duke de Mahon, who had been sent as civil governor from Madrid. He published a severe edict, denouncing punishment on all inhabitants in whose possession arms should be found; and having dispersed the band of Mina, the flame of insurrection was for a time smothered.

Jan. 20.

Such was the situation of Arragon and Navarre, when Suchet received orders from Marshal Soult, in his capacity of Major-General, to march rapidly on Valencia in two columns, one proceeding by Teruel and Segorba, the other by Morella San Mateo, and the road leading along

CHAP. IX. 1810. February.

the coast. Though these orders were at variance with his instructions from Paris, which directed, as preliminary measures, the siege of Lerida and Mequinenza, Suchet did not conceive himself at liberty to disobey. Accordingly, he repaired to Teruel, leaving General Musnier, with eight battalions and two hundred and fifty horse, to maintain tranquillity in Arragon. A column under General Habert proceeded by the coast. That under his own immediate command encountered the Valencian force at Alventosa. The Spaniards were strongly posted, with a ravine in front, along the bottom of which flowed the deep and sluggish river Minjares. The road leading along the left bank of the stream was broken up and obstructed, and on the other side the village of Alventosa extended round a precipitate and rugged height crowned by a ruined castle, which commanded the surrounding country.

Feb. 25.

Suchet determined to attack the left flank of this formidable position, and succeeded by a considerable detour in passing the river nearer to its source. The Valencians did not long withstand the attack of the French columns. They retreated with the loss of five guns and a portion of

their baggage. At Murviedro a junction was effected with Habert, and the army pushed on to Valencia. CHAP. IX. 1810. March.

The garrison of Valencia consisted chiefly of the soldiers who had fled disgracefully from Belchite. Suchet addressed a letter to General Caro, the Governor, in hope of inducing that officer to surrender the city. He assured him that he had not come to make war on the fine capital of the most beautiful of the Spanish provinces, but to offer peace and protection, such as Jaen, Granada, Cordova, and Seville, were at that moment enjoying. It was inhuman, he said, to prolong a contest, maintained at a vast expense of human suffering, where the issue was inevitable; and he called on General Caro to prove himself a benefactor to his country by surrendering the city of Valencia to the French arms. A proclamation was likewise issued to the people, declaring the anxiety of the French General to avoid effusion of blood, and exhorting the people to assist in the attainment of this humane wish. Mar. 5.

To this an answer was returned, stating, that Valencia had repulsed Marshal Moncey, and was prepared to repulse General Suchet; and that if

CHAP. IX. 1810. the latter was sincere in the laudable desire he had expressed to avoid bloodshed, it was for him to consider, whether the best and surest method of attaining that object was not to abstain from attack.

In truth, the force of Suchet, consisting only of twelve thousand men, and thirty field-pieces, was altogether inadequate to the enterprize in which he had engaged; and, having remained for five days in front of Valencia, he found it necessary to retrace his steps to the Ebro. He then made preparations for a systematic reduction of the strong places held by the Spaniards, with the view to facilitate his future efforts for the reduction of the eastern provinces.

February. Blake having been appointed Governor of Cadiz, O'Donnel succeeded to the chief command in Catalonia. The skilful and daring operations in which he had successfully engaged, had acquired for him the confidence of the people. Augerau had supposed that little more remained, after the reduction of Gerona, than to complete and rivet the subjection of the province. In this he was mistaken. A combat took place, in the neighbourhood of Vich, between a body of Spaniards, under O'Donnel,

and the division of General Souham. The former bore themselves with courage, and assailed the enemy with a steadiness and resolution to which they were unaccustomed. Never, by the confession of their own officers, was the courage of the French army more severely tested than in this action. O'Donnel, however, at length judged it prudent to retire, leaving the enemy in possession of the field.

1810. February.

Souham, imagining the Spaniards had fled from fear, prepared to pursue. O'Donnel then commenced a series of skilful manœuvres, by which, having led his enemy forward, he succeeded in achieving several brilliant and important successes. The French losses in these engagements were very heavy, and they were still further aggravated by desertions from the foreign troops, who went over to the enemy in considerable numbers.

In the meanwhile, the French prosecuted the siege of Hostalrich. The town had already fallen; but the fort, which is strongly situated on a craggy height, still held out, and the garrison were animated by the best spirit. An attempt was made by O'Donnel to afford relief

CHAP. IX. to the beseiged, but without success, and that leader fell back on Tarragona.

1810. May.

Disappointed in their hopes from without, the garrison still continued to defend the fort with the most honourable fortitude and zeal. The besiegers kept up a dreadful bombardment, and the walls were gradually demolished by the fire of the batteries. They still, however, continued successfully to contest the possession of the

May 12. place till the twelfth of May, when, having undergone a siege of four months, and consumed the whole of their provisions, these brave men determined to cut their way through the enemy's lines. In this bold attempt, about three hundred fell, and among these the heroic Don Julian de Estrada, their commander. The remainder succeeded in effecting their escape.

These results were far from satisfactory to Napoleon. Marshal Augerau had boasted, in his despatches, that the Ampurdan was completely subdued; but the comment of succeeding facts on this assertion had not been favourable to its credit with the Emperor, and Augerau was superseded by Marshal Macdonald.

The loss of Hostalrich was succeeded by an-

other of some consequence. The islands and fortress of Las Medas, forming an important maritime post, were surrendered to the French without resistance, through treason or cowardice. Lerida also yielded without adequate resistance. Suchet opened his batteries against it on the seventh of May. On the twelfth, a magazine exploded in the town, and formed a breach. By this the French assaulted the town and carried it. On the day following the castle surrendered.

1810.

May.

May. 13.

Success followed the arms of Suchet, whenever he was not induced to transgress the rules of his art. The fort of Mequinenza, notwithstanding its strength, became an easy prize. After five days resistance it capitulated, and the subjection of Arragon being now fully assured, Suchet found himself at liberty to extend the sphere of his operations.

June 8.

The peace with Austria having rendered disposable the greater part of the force employed in Germany, large bodies of troops were thrown into Spain, and every corps was augmented. That of Junot, composed of the troops liberated by the Convention of Cintra, consisted of three divisions of infantry, and one of cavalry, amount-

CHAP. IX. ing altogether to about twelve thousand men.

1810. March. Hitherto this force had been employed in dispersing the irregular bands which abounded in Biscay, Navarre, and Old Castile. But on receiving reinforcements, Junot advanced into Leon, with the view of protecting that kingdom from the incursions of the Gallician army. Astorga was garrisoned by about three thousand Spanish troops; and an attack made upon it, in the preceding September, had been gallantly repulsed by Santocildes, who still acted as Governor. The city was not strong, yet considerable efforts had been made to improve and repair the works. The walls were ancient and massive, and the suburbs, to the north and south, were covered and connected with the body of the place by a line of retrenchment. Astorga contained large magazines of all sorts; and its acquisition, at this period, was held of great importance to the intended operations in Portugal, as it commanded a *debouché* leading into the north of that kingdom.

Mar. 21. On the twenty-first of March, Junot invested Astorga. The defence of the city was resolutely maintained for upwards of a month, when, at length, having repulsed their assailants at the

breach, the garrison surrendered, only when the near exhaustion of their ammunition rendered further defence hopeless. The French suffered heavily in this siege, though the amount of their loss has been variously represented. This is certain: The expense of life at which Astorga was acquired, and the gallantry of its defenders, had a greater effect in animating the people, than its reduction in depressing them.*

On the fall of Astorga, a detachment of Junot's corps reduced the castle of Sanabria, while the remainder proceeded to invest Ciudad Rodrigo. The Asturias had been reduced to submission; so that, at the end of April, of the whole western frontier of Spain, Gallicia and Badajos alone remained free. The latter had been secured by the promptitude of Romana, when the corps of Mortier was approaching

* Long after the capture of Astorga, a song was popular among the middling and lower classes, recounting the achievements of the besieged, each stanza of which terminated in a sort of choral chant, declaring that "*Astorga was the tomb of Frenchmen.*" We merely allude to this, as an indication of that buoyancy of spirit, which enabled the Spanish people to bear up amid so many and severe reverses, and to discover matter of exultation even in disaster.

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from Seville, in expectation of carrying it by a *coup-de-main*. Baffled in this attempt, the French retired to Merida, Zafra, and Santa Marta, followed by a division, under Don Carlos O'Donnel.

CHAPTER X.

INVASION OF PORTUGAL BY MASSENA.

SINCE the commencement of the year, the campaign had hitherto been one of almost uninterrupted disaster. The Spaniards, had no army of any magnitude in the field; their most important fortresses were reduced or blockaded; and three-fourths of the kingdom had been overrun. The southern provinces had fallen, with scarcely the semblance of resistance. The wealth and resources of Andalusia had passed, without a struggle, into the hands of the enemy; and Spain beheld the chief nursery of her armies, the provinces from which fresh bands of patriots might still have gone forth to combat, if not to conquer, in her cause, at once torn from her grasp. The British army had been compelled to limit its exertions to the defence of

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Portugal; and it was already evident that a mighty effort would soon be made for the reduction of that kingdom.

Never at any period had the cloud which lowered on the cause of Spanish liberty shed a darker or more impenetrable gloom. Those whose confidence in the zeal, the devotion, the native and untamed energy of the Spanish people had led them to predict a successful termination to the contest, now wavered in their hope. The British government, urged by the enthusiasm of the people, had at first rushed blindfold into the contest. The vast resources of England had been ineffectually wasted; her utmost efforts had been found unequal to arrest the progress of the French arms; and the lamentable expedition to the Scheldt, had exposed the counsels of her rulers to the ridicule of Europe.

Under such reverses, the enthusiasm of the British nation had begun to subside. The bright and glowing colours, which in their eyes had beautified the prospect, gradually faded into fainter and more sober hues. True, indeed, the voice of England was still for war; there was no flinching or faintness of heart among her sons,—but it was not as heretofore, for sudden,

desultory, and ill-judged operations,—for hasty advance and precipitate retreat—for profuse expenditure of blood and money in pursuit of "*British objects*,"—objects indeed, generally so truly British that no other government on earth would have thought them worth the expense and hazard of pursuit.

Thus the blunders and incapacity of the ministry had in a great measure lost them the confidence of the country. Even their warmer partisans—those who exonerated the men, did not venture to vindicate their measures. The government had to encounter a strong and vehement opposition both in Parliament and in the country. The policy of withdrawing our army from the Peninsula,—of husbanding the resources of England, till time and circumstances should be more favourable for their efficacious exertion, found many advocates among the greatest and most enlightened statesmen of whom England could boast.

But party spirit was abroad in its violence; and the doctrine of opposition, though generally salutary, was scarcely applicable to the crisis at which England had arrived. At all events it was carried too far. Pertinacity on one side had gene-

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rated exaggeration on the other. Prudence is not a popular virtue; and the tame doctrine of temporary inaction, though supported by a considerable body of the nation, was but little in harmony with the pugnacious appetite of the majority. The Whigs were distrusted and disliked; and many who condemned the ministry, were still anxious to retain them in power. In Parliament a trial of strength took place on the debate on the Walcheren Expedition, and the Tories triumphed. The government, aware of the necessity of retrieving the disgrace of former failures, determined to prosecute the war with increased vigour. At the expense of nearly a million sterling, the Portuguese subsidiary force was augmented to thirty thousand men, and all the troops immediately disposable were sent out to augment the army of Lord Wellington.

In the meanwhile, strong reinforcements had crossed the Pyrenees, and the French at this period had a force in Spain, of not less than three hundred thousand men, distributed over the whole surface of the country; Gallicia, Valencia, and Murcia, being the only provinces which remained free. Had even half of this force been concentrated, there was nothing in

the Peninsula which could oppose its progress; but the nature of the warfare waged by the Spaniards, required its subdivision into numerous small bodies, to maintain the subjection of the conquered provinces, and to scatter the irregular bands which occupied the mountain strongholds, and rarely suffered an opportunity of successful action to escape. These objects were not to be accomplished without heavy and continual losses. The animosity of the people was working in silence the destruction of the invaders; and Napoleon, in a country which his leaders had represented as *conquered*, beheld his armies gradually melting, and his efforts rendered nugatory, by the silent operation of causes which he could neither mitigate nor control.

But the most prominent and immediate obstacle to the success of his projects, was the presence of a British force in the Peninsula. Till the "Leopard should have been driven into the sea," a large army in Spain was required to watch its movements. The force thus employed could lend no aid towards the general object of extending and securing the submission of the people to French authority. Its efforts were necessarily directed to one sin-

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gle and paramount object; and till that had been accomplished, it was for all other purposes entirely useless.

Lord Wellington, therefore, at once perceived that the force at his disposal was not strong enough for offensive operations; and he knew, besides, that the loss attendant even on a victory, might be ruinous in its consequences. Determined to abandon the Peninsula only in the last extremity, he waited therefore the approach of the enemy, prepared to take advantage of every circumstance which might contribute to his security, and enable him to baffle the powerful efforts of a superior enemy.

In the beginning of May, Lord Wellington was apprized of some movements in the French army, which indicated their intention of advancing against Ciudad Rodrigo. He accordingly moved towards the frontier, establishing his head-quarters at Celorico, and his divisions at Pinhel, Alverca, Guarda, Trancoso, and along the valley of the Mondego, as far as Cea; and on the opposite bank of that river, at Fornos, Mangualde, and Vizeu. The corps of Sir Rowland Hill remained in the neighbourhood of Abrantes, to check any operation on the part

of Regnier. In this position Lord Wellington determined to watch the movements, and await the approach of the enemy.

During the long period of tranquillity which had elapsed, both parties had been engaged in great and important preparations.* Under command of Massena, perhaps the most celebrated of the great captains of Napoleon, a powerful army was assembling for the invasion of Portugal. It consisted of the corps of Marshals Ney and Junot, and of General Regnier; while the corps of Mortier threatened an advance on the frontier of Alentejo. Besides these, General Montiniere was at Valladolid, with nine thousand infantry and four regiments of cavalry; and to give still greater importance to this imposing demon-

* At this period a change took place in the organization of the French armies. The first, fourth, and fifth corps, which had invaded Andalusia, formed the army of the south, and was commanded by Soult, having under him Victor, Sebastiani, and Mortier.

The army of the centre, under the immediate orders of Joseph, was composed of the Royal Guard, of several corps which had been raised in his service, and of the French garrisons within the district allotted for its occupation.

The army of Portugal consisted of the second, sixth, and eighth corps, under the command of Massena.

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stration, a strong body of the Imperial Guard crossed the Pyrenees, and the remainder was held in readiness to follow,—circumstances conveying a strong intimation that Napoleon intended to assume the personal command. On his side, Lord Wellington directed the works of Almeida and Abrantes to be strengthened and repaired, and determined to obstruct the progress of the enemy by every means in his power. Though anxious as long as possible to prevent the tide of war from rolling onward from the frontier, he had determined, on the advance of the enemy, to fall back on his resources, and thus to add materially to the difficulties of his opponent, by compelling him to weaken his force in the occupation of distant provinces, and extend the line of his communications through a hostile country.

The numerical force of the hostile armies may be thus calculated :—

British and Portuguese Army.

The corps with Lord Wellington,	30,000
The corps with Lieutenant-General Hill, - - -	14,000
Carried over, -	44,000

Brought over,	44,000
The reserve under Major-General Leith, - - -	10,000
	54,000
In co-operation with this force was	
A corps of Portuguese Militia, -	10,000
The Spanish troops under Romana,	10,000
Making a grand total of	76,000

Army under Massena.

The infantry of the 2d, 6th, and 8th corps, - - -	62,000
The Cavalry, - -	6000
The Artillery, &c. - -	4000
Total,	72,000
To this were afterwards joined	
Two divisions of the 9th corps under Drouet, - -	10,000
The remaining division of this corps under General Claperede, -	8000
The corps of Mortier co-operating on the south of the Tagus, -	13,000
Making a grand total of	103,000

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By those who would form a just estimate of the relative strength of these armies, the description of troops of which they were composed must be taken into calculation. The Portuguese were yet untried. By the exertions of Marshal Beresford, they had indeed been brought into a state of comparative discipline, but it was impossible to place any sanguine reliance on their conduct in the field. To give them confidence in themselves, Lord Wellington had directed the troops of the two nations to be brigaded together, in the proportion of one Portuguese to two British regiments. Of the regular troops, therefore, hopes might be entertained; but the Portuguese militia were so entirely defective in organization, as to be utterly unfit for the active operations of a campaign.

The French army, on the other hand, was composed of troops accustomed to conquer, and in the highest state of discipline; while that of Lord Wellington might be compared to a piece of tesselated Mosaic, pleasing to the eye, yet far inferior in strength to a surface composed of one uniform and unbroken material.

Lord Wellington had early foreseen that the

attack of the enemy would be on the eastern frontier of Portugal, by the way of Lower Beira. There were only two other routes by which it was practicable to penetrate into the kingdom: the one by Elvas and the Alentejo, the other through Gallicia on the north. By the first of these it was impossible to reach Lisbon, from the intervention of the Tagus. The second was obstructed by impenetrable ranges of gigantic mountains, which crossed every possible line of march. That Massena would invade the kingdom by either of these lines was utterly improbable.

Certain therefore of the route that would be followed by the enemy, Lord Wellington made his dispositions accordingly. Looking on Ciudad Rodrigo, and Almeida, as the points of which Massena must become master, before he could march either upon Lisbon or Oporto, he took up a position on the frontier mountains of Beira, in form of the segment of a circle, of which the convex part was presented to the quarter from which the enemy must approach. The defensive line was about thirty miles in extent, but its circular form gave it this advantage, that its several points were not distant from each other

CHAP. X 1810. June. in proportion to the length of its circumference. The several posts, moreover, were very strongly secured by the nature of the ground. The Coa, with its tributary streams, flowed along the front of the line through the greater part of its extent.

In the beginning of June, Massena advanced from Salamanca, to commence the siege of Ciudad Rodrigo. He brought with him a considerable train of artillery; and the speedy surrender
Jun. 11. of the place was confidently anticipated. Notwithstanding the importance which had always been attached to this fortress, it was not in the best state of defence. The works were old, and in many points defective; there were no bomb-proofs; and the town itself, though built partly on a rock and washed by the Agueda, was not strong, being commanded from many points, and particularly by a height called the Teson. Some new works, however, had been added on the side on which it is most easily accessible; a ditch had been dug flanked by two bastions, and exertions made to render the convents without the walls available for the defence of the approaches. The garrison, under command of General Herrasti, consisted of four

thousand nine hundred and fifty men, chiefly of the new levies. The population of the town did not much exceed the garrison in number.

The siege of Ciudad Rodrigo was undertaken with two corps only, that of Regnier being detached to the left of the Tagus for the greater facility of procuring subsistence. Early in June the place was in a state of complete investment. The trenches were opened on the night of the eleventh, and the enemy continued to push on the parallels till the twenty-fourth. The convents of Santa Cruz and St. Francisco, situated without the walls, were carried by assault; and, on the morning of the twenty-fifth, the enemy opened a heavy fire on the body of the place from a battery of forty-six guns planted on the Teson. By this, and by riflemen stationed in pits, the fire of the garrison was kept down, and the sap was pushed to the glacis. The besiegers' batteries were then within sixty toises of the place, and the effects of the fire became infinitely more decisive. Nothing, however, could exceed the steadiness and resolution of the garrison. Every inch of ground was manfully disputed, and frequent sorties were made which occasioned great loss

Jun. 24.

CHAP. X. to the besiegers. The place held out till the tenth of July; and capitulated only when several practicable breaches had been effected, the principal defences destroyed, and the enemy had assembled in the trenches for the assault.

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The siege of Ciudad Rodrigo was carried on almost in the very presence of the British army. The outposts were near enough to hear even the report of musquetry; but, with every temptation to relieve the brave garrison of the place, Lord Wellington declined assuming the offensive. With so large a proportion of his troops half-disciplined and untried, and with so mighty an interest at stake, he could not, without imprudence, have encountered an enemy so greatly superior in numbers. It was not his object to risk his army for the sake of petty or temporary triumph; and having already laid down a plan by which Portugal would eventually be rescued, he could not be induced to swerve from it by any circumstances, however painful to his feelings, or apparently derogatory to his reputation.

On the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, Massena detached a portion of his army to the relief of Astorga, which had been placed by General

Mahy in a state of blockade. This object was easily effected; and General Echevarria, who was engaged at Alcanizas in organizing a body of raw levies, was surprised by a detachment under General La Croix, and his force was nearly annihilated.

On crossing the frontier, Massena issued a proclamation to the Portuguese. The Emperor, he declared, had placed one hundred and ten thousand men under his orders, to take possession of the kingdom, and expel the English. It was the wish of Napoleon to conciliate and promote the true interests of the Portuguese people. The English—that insidious people, who for selfish purposes, had involved the country in war and disaster—were their only enemies. "Let the arms they have put into your hands be turned against themselves. Resistance is vain. Can the feeble army of the British General expect to oppose the victorious legions of the Emperor? Already a force is collected sufficient to overwhelm your country. Snatch the moment that mercy and generosity offer! As friends you may respect us, and as friends become the object of our respect. As foes you must dread us, and in the

CHAP. X. 1810. July. conflict must be subdued. The choice is now before you, to meet the horrors of a bloody war, to behold your country desolated, your villages in flames, your cities plundered; or to accept an honourable and happy peace, which will obtain for you every blessing, that by resistance will be lost for ever."

On the fall of Ciudad Rodrigo, the enemy advanced against Almeida. Fort Conception was blown up on their approach; and General Crawford, with the light division, took post with his left flank resting on the fortress, and his right on the high ground above Val de Mula. Lord Wellington had directed that officer to avoid any engagement with the enemy, and on their approach to fall back across the Coa. General Crawford, however, determined to await the arrival of the French columns, and not to retire till pressed by superior numbers. On the morn-
ul. 24. ing of the twenty-fourth the piquets were driven in by the French skirmishers, which covered the advance of their columns. A vigorous attack was then made on Crawford's position, in which the whole corps of Ney was engaged. The British were compelled by superior numbers to give ground, and retreated down the hill to the

Coa. From the rains the river was unfordable, and some confusion took place in crossing the bridge. The rear-guard had to sustain a violent attack, and the French endeavoured to push a body of cavalry across the stream; but the opposite bank of the Coa being precipitate, and occupied both by infantry and artillery, the attempt, though repeatedly made, was unattended by success. Nor were the enemy's endeavours to gain possession of the bridge more fortunate in result. The British, who were posted behind walls which formed a kind of natural retrenchment for its defence, kept up so warm a fire on the assailants, that they were uniformly repulsed, notwithstanding their great numerical superiority; and General Crawford having maintained his new position till evening, fell back under cover of the night. The loss of the light division in this honourable engagement amounted to thirty killed, and two hundred and seventy wounded. That of the enemy was much more considerable.

The French had already commenced that shameful system of cruelty and plunder, which disgraced the army of Massena throughout the whole of its operations in Portugal. Even in

CHAP. X. 1810. August. the villages which submitted without resistance, the most infamous excesses were committed. The confidence manifested by the unfortunate inhabitants in the promises of Massena was repaid by conflagration, murder, robbery, and violation. A proclamation, therefore, was issued by Lord Wellington, commanding all individuals to remove their effects out of reach of the enemy. "The Portuguese," said this document, "must now perceive that no other means remain to avoid the evils with which they are threatened, but a determined and vigorous resistance, and a firm resolution to obstruct, as much as possible, the advance of the enemy into the interior of the kingdom, by removing out of his reach every thing that may contribute to his subsistence, or facilitate his progress. The army under my command will protect as large a portion of the country as is possible; but it is obvious that the people alone can deliver themselves by a vigorous resistance, and preserve their goods by removing them beyond the reach of the enemy. The duties, therefore, that bind me to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent of Portugal, and to the Portuguese nation, oblige me to make use of the power and authority

Aug. 4.

with which I am intrusted, to compel the careless and indolent to make the necessary efforts to preserve themselves from the dangers which threaten them, and to save their country. I therefore make known and declare, that all magistrates, and persons in authority, who shall remain in the villages and towns, after having received orders from the military officers to remove from them; and all persons of whatever class they may be, who shall maintain the least communication with, or aid and assist the enemy in any manner, shall be considered as traitors to the state, and tried and punished as an offence so heinous requires."

Almeida being a place of greater strength than Ciudad Rodrigo, Lord Wellington was entitled to expect that its defence would have been at least equally protracted, and that the advance of Massena would have been retarded till the commencement of the rainy season, when his difficulties would have been greatly increased. Lest he should determine, however, on pushing forward without waiting for its surrender, Lord Wellington drew back his divisions from Pinhel and Trancoso, and posted them along the Valley of the Mondego, in rear of Celori-

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co. By this arrangement his army was placed several marches in start of the enemy, and time afforded for a leisurely retreat, whenever that measure should become necessary.

Massena, however, had determined to besiege Almeida; but his operations were delayed by the difficulties of the ground, and fire was not opened on the place till the twenty-third of August.

Aug. 27. On the twenty-seventh, however, the town unexpectedly surrendered. The cause of this unfortunate event was the explosion of a magazine, containing nearly all the ammunition of the place, which destroyed a large portion of the town, and buried the inhabitants in its ruins. The greater number of the guns were dismounted; huge masses of stone were thrown into the trenches, by which twenty French soldiers were killed; all the troops employed in guarding the ramparts were swept away by the violence of the shock; the citadel was overthrown; and the walls were rent in many places. Under these circumstances, the governor, General Cox, endeavoured to capitulate, on the condition of being suffered to retire with his garrison. This proposal was rejected, and the French again opened fire on the place. On the following day, how-

Guingret Campagnes de l'Armée de Portugal.

ever, a capitulation was agreed upon, which stipulated, that the regular troops should be considered prisoners of war, but that the militia should be suffered to return to their homes, on condition of not resuming arms during the contest.

These terms were perfidiously broken by the enemy. A body of twelve hundred militia was forced to serve as pioneers; and every inducement was held out, through the agency of the Marques de Alorna and other Portuguese renegades, to prevail on the troops of the line to enter the French service, and assist in the subjugation of their country. As the alternative, in case of refusal, was a French prison, it was not difficult to obtain their assent. Massena, however, did not profit by his dishonesty. Nearly all the men found means to escape, and in a few days rejoined the standard of their country; and Lord Wellington, indignant at a breach of faith so dishonourable, did not hesitate to re-incorporate them with his army.

The fall of Ciudad Rodrigo and Almeida, in the immediate vicinity of the English army, was made, as might be expected, the subject of unmeasured boasting in the French bul-

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letins. These first successes were hailed as the certain forerunners of approaching triumph, and held up to the world as new and unanswerable proof of the folly of attempting to obstruct the French armies in their career of conquest. The siege of the important fortresses in question, it was said, had been carried on under the very eyes of Lord Wellington and his army. Yet he had not dared to advance to their rescue. He had sacrificed his allies, to his fear of French valour, and of that army which was speedily, by one decisive victory, to drive him from the Peninsula.

In England the apprehensions of all classes had been strongly excited; and the army, ignorant of the vast preparations which had been made for the defence of Lisbon, regarded retreat but as the prelude of embarkation. Even the British Government was hesitating and fearful. No precise course was pointed out to Lord Wellington to pursue; but his instructions were couched in terms which showed the Ministry to be averse from any measures of boldness and hazard. He was directed to avoid all operations by which the safety of the army might be compromised, and was informed, that his Majesty

would be better pleased that the troops should be immediately withdrawn, than that their safe embarkation should be risked by unnecessary delay.

In such circumstances, Lord Wellington, with the firmness and confidence that became him, did not hesitate to assume the whole of that responsibility, from which it was evident, in case of disaster, the Government would be solicitous to escape. In no word or action of this great leader was vacillation discernible. He stood firm and collected, resolute in purpose, when all around him were wavering in hope; and, in the unfettered exercise of his energies at such a moment, exhibiting a degree of moral intrepidity which it is impossible to contemplate without admiration.

The Portuguese, aghast at the approaching peril, watched with fearful anxiety the gathering of the cloud which was about to burst in thunder on their devoted country. The Government, aware of their own utter helplessness if deserted by England, adopted the only policy by which their country could eventually be saved, and entered with manly earnestness into the views of Lord Wellington. The nobility

CHAP. X. 1810. September. and higher classes, submissive to misfortunes which they could not avert, were generally faithful in their adherence to the cause of their country. The lower orders were animated by a detestation of their treacherous enemy, so powerful and unchangeable, that every confidence might be placed in their devotion and attachment, even in circumstances the most adverse.

Sep. 16. The fall of Almeida left no further obstacle to the enemy's advance, and on the sixteenth of September, having been joined by the corps of General Regnier, Massena commenced his march into Portugal. His army was formed into three columns. Junot's corps advanced by Pinhel and Trancoso; Ney's by Alverca; and the third, under Regnier, by Guarda and Celorico. At Vizeu, however, the whole army was concentrated; and from that point, in one immense body, pursued their march along the road on the right bank of the Mondego. Each French soldier carried provisions for seventeen days; a period which, at a moderate calculation, was considered sufficient to enable the army to reach Lisbon.

Of the country now to be traversed by the

hostile armies it may here be expedient to say something. The road selected by Massena for his advance was of the worst description; full of natural impediments; and by all the officers, by whom it had been surveyed, considered almost impracticable. The direct, and in every respect preferable, road to Coimbra and Lisbon runs along the left bank of the Mondego. By this Lord Wellington retreated, in a line nearly parallel with that followed by his opponent. Had Massena determined on advancing by the road on the south of the Mondego, he must have previously encountered the British army in the strong passes of the Estrella, a high mountain chain, extending from the Tagus to the Mondego. This, however, did not comport with his project of the campaign; and, notwithstanding its numerous disadvantages, he directed his march along the road to the northward of the river. After passing Vizeu, the road declines from the ridge into a lower and more level country, and is subsequently crossed by the Serra de Busaco, which terminates abruptly on the Mondego. On the southern bank of that river there is another range called the Serra de Marcella, which forms

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an obstacle of equal magnitude to the advance in that quarter. To penetrate by any tolerable road from Vizeu into Estremadura, it is necessary to cross one or other of these mountainous chains. Lord Wellington having ascertained the direction of the enemy's march, accordingly crossed the Mondego, and occupied the Busaco range with his whole force, and in that strong position awaited the approach of the French army.

The corps of General Hill had hitherto been stationed on the line of the Tagus, in order to protect that route, while the intentions of the enemy remained dubious; and General Leith, with the reserve, remained at Thomar, ready to support either Hill or Wellington, as occasion might demand. Both of these divisions, by a rapid and well-regulated march, joined the army on the twentieth, and took post on the ridge of Busaco.

The position thus occupied consisted of one lofty ridge, extending from the Mondego northward, for a distance of about eight miles. It attains an elevation of two hundred and fifty feet above the ground immediately in front, and is covered by gorges and defiles of extreme dif-

ficulty. Its principal disadvantage as a position lay in its extent, which was manifestly too great to admit of its being occupied at all points by an army not above sixty thousand strong.

Some skirmishing had occurred on the twenty-third, between the light division and the advanced guard of the French. The former destroyed the bridge across the Criz, on the road to Coimbra; but, on the following day, the river was passed by the leading divisions of the enemy, and on the twenty-sixth, the whole French army was concentrated in front of the British position. Sep. 23. Sep. 26.

Even at this period, Massena seems to have formed no just appreciation of the skill and activity of his opponent. He had calculated on deranging his schemes, by the rapidity of his march, and imagined it impossible that the army should have been joined by the corps of General Hill. On reconnoitring the position, therefore, he considered its extent too great to admit of successful defence, and is said to have observed to one of the unworthy Portuguese by whom he was surrounded, "I cannot persuade myself that Lord Wellington will risk the loss of his re-

CHAP. X. putation by giving battle; but if he does, I have him! To-morrow we shall effect the conquest of Portugal,—and in a few days I shall drown the Leopard!"

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The head-quarters of Lord Wellington were fixed in the Convent of La Trappe, which crowns the Serra. From that elevated position, indeed from the whole summit of the height, the French army were distinctly visible. No sight could be more beautiful and striking. The eye rested on a vast multitude of men, clad in the imposing panoply of war,—their arms glittering in the sun,—standards waving in the air, while the distant sound of the trumpet or bugle loaded the breeze.

Sep. 26. On the evening of the twenty-sixth, the line of battle was formed. The division of General Hill, with those of Leith and Picton on his left, occupied the right of the position. The first division, under Sir Brent Spencer, was in the centre, General Cole's on the left. The light division was advanced somewhat in front of the left and centre. The main body of the cavalry, under Sir Stapleton Cotton, formed in the plains in front of Mealhada, and across the Oporto road; and the brigade of General Fane remain-

ed on the left bank of the Mondego, to repel any reconnoissance which the enemy might attempt in that direction. CHAP. X. 1810. September.

Such was the distribution of the allied army. Daydawn on the twenty-seventh, shewed the enemy drawn up for immediate attack. The corps of Ney was formed in close column opposite to the Convent of Busaco. That of Regnier appeared in front of Picton's division, prepared to advance by the road crossing the height St. Antonio de Cantara. Junot's corps was in reserve, with the greater part of the cavalry, and was posted on some rising ground about a mile in rear of Marshal Ney. Sep. 27.

In this order, covered by his light troops, the enemy's columns moved on to the attack. The abruptness and inequalities of the ascent contributed to cover their advance, and they reached the summit of the ridge without more serious opposition, than the occasional fire of guns posted on the flanking points. It was with the corps of Regnier that the first hostile collision took place. The regiments, in the part of the line to which he penetrated, had not reached the position assigned to them, and for a moment the height was in possession

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of the enemy. Their leading battalions were in the act of deploying into line, when General Picton, at the head of a few companies hastily collected, came up, and with these and the light troops, he kept the enemy in play, until joined by the eighth Portuguese regiment commanded by Major Birmingham, when charging the enemy's column in flank, he drove them in great confusion down the hill and across the ravine.

About a mile on the right, the enemy made strenuous efforts to gain possession of the pass of St. Antonio. These, however, were defeated by the seventy-fourth regiment, and a brigade of Portuguese directed by Colonel Mackinnon, who, without assistance, was enabled to maintain his post in spite of every effort to dislodge him. Notwithstanding the complete discomfiture of his first attack by General Picton, on the left of the pass, the enemy's column still continued to press forward, and again reached the summit of the height. From this the eighty-eighth regiment, under Colonel Wallace, and four companies of the forty-fifth, dislodged them by a gallant charge; and a brigade of General Leith's division, coming up at the same moment, the enemy were borne down

the hill with irresistible impetuosity, and desist- CHAP. X.
ed from all further attempt on this part of the position. 1810. September.

The attack of Ney was even less successful; with a division of his corps formed in column of mass, he advanced against the height occupied by the light division. During his advance he experienced little opposition, and without difficulty gained possession of a village situated on the brow of the ascent; but no sooner did he crown the height, than he found the whole division of General Crawford, and General Pack's brigade of Portuguese, drawn up to receive him, and his column became exposed to a most destructive fire, both of musquetry and artillery. This, however, was but of short duration,—yet, so long, that the leading regiments of the assailants were almost totally annihilated. A charge of bayonets followed; the whole column was routed, and driven down the hill with prodigious slaughter. The expression of a French soldier, who was engaged in this attack, and subsequently made prisoner, "*Qu'il se laissa rouler du haut en bas de la montagne sans savoir comment il echappa*," is sufficiently explanatory of the mode

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in which the remnant of this division effected its escape.

About eight o'clock in the morning, a fog came on, which, for a time, partially obscured the positions of the two armies; when the day cleared, however, it was discovered that the French had placed large bodies of light troops in the woods, which skirted the bottom of the Serra. In consequence, a continued skirmishing took place during the day. It was probably the intention of Massena, by this manœuvre, to draw Lord Wellington into an engagement of some consequence, in a situation where the advantage of position should be less decidedly in his favour. But Lord Wellington was immoveable. He advanced the brigade of Colonel Pakenham to the support of the light troops, but directed them to retire when pressed, leaving his position again open to the enemy, should he think proper to attack it.

Massena, however, was but little inclined to avail himself of the facility thus afforded. The day passed without further attack on the British position; and on the approach of night, the French retired from the ground they had occu-

pied during the day, and the village, from which the light troops had been driven in the morning, was again taken possession of by General Crawford.

The loss of the French army in this engagement amounted to between five and six thousand men, including four General officers, one of whom (Graindorge) was killed; another (Simon) wounded and made prisoner. The British and Portuguese loss did not amount to twelve hundred men. About three hundred of the enemy were made prisoners.

Though the victory of Busaco exerted little influence on the operations of the campaign, its moral consequences were in the highest degree important. The Portuguese troops, which had hitherto been the object of contempt to some, and of mistrust to all, on that occasion established their character both for courage and discipline, and proved that, though exposed for centuries to the action of debasing influences, there existed in the unbroken spirit of the people, a germ of high qualities, which, by proper management, might be made to fructify into a glorious harvest. The contemned and vilified Portuguese had now fought side by side with

CHAP. X. 1810. September. British soldiers, and had borne themselves with honourable courage. Lord Wellington declared he had never witnessed a more gallant charge than that made on the column of General Regnier, in which the eighth Portuguese regiment bore part; and the confidence which he was now enabled to repose in their steadiness and energy, was worth more than a victory, even greater and more splendid in its consequences than that which he had achieved.

It was from the meritorious exertions of Marshal Beresford that this result had proceeded. The task allotted him of organizing and habituating the raw levies of the country to a steady and rigid system of discipline, was one for which his powers peculiarly fitted him; and he performed it well. No man could be more profoundly versed in the minute technicalities of his profession, or more laboriously attentive to the dry mechanical details of military discipline. The extent and value of his services were made known by the battle of Busaco, and, in consequence, he was shortly afterwards rewarded by the knighthood of the Bath.

Sep. 28. On the morning of the twenty-eighth, the armies still maintained their respective positions,

and the light infantry were again partially engaged on the left of the line. Towards midday, Massena having ascertained, from some Portuguese peasants, the existence of a practicable road across the Serra de Caramula, leading by Boialvo to Sardao, and the great road from Coimbra to Oporto, he determined to put his army in motion by that route, and thus, by a flank manœuvre, to turn the position of the British. In order to conceal his intention, the second corps continued to make demonstrations on the position of the allies, till the baggage and artillery had defiled; but the position of Busaco commands an extensive prospect, and towards evening a large body of the French army was observed to be in motion from the left of the centre to the rear, and from thence their cavalry were seen in march along the road leading from Mortagoa across the Serra, in the direction of Oporto. Lord Wellington was at once aware of their purpose, but it was too late to counteract or impede its execution.

In truth, the probability of the enemy's attempting to turn the position by this route was not unanticipated; and Colonel Trant, with a body of Portuguese militia, had been

CHAP. X. 1810. September. directed to take possession of the strong mountain passes in the neighbourhood of Sardao and Avelina. Unfortunately, however, Trant was sent round by Oporto by General Silveira, in consequence of a small force of the enemy having occupied St. Pedro de Sul; and notwithstanding every effort, he found it impossible to reach Sardao before the night of the twenty-eighth, when the enemy were already in possession of the ground. By this untoward failure, the French army were suffered to continue their progress unopposed through a series of defiles, which they could not otherwise have passed without severe loss.

On ascertaining the movement of the French army, Lord Wellington gave instant orders to quit the position of Busaco, and continue the retreat. With the main body of the army he moved on Coimbra, while the corps of General Hill retired on Santarem by Espinhel and Thomar. Colonel Trant was ordered to take post with his corps along the northern bank of the Vouga; and a body of militia was directed to enter Vizeu, in order to cut off the enemy's communication with Spain.

The banks of the Mondego are generally high

and rugged, presenting many favourable positions in which the passage of the French army might have been successfully opposed. But such was not the policy of the British General. With a more advantageous position in prospect, he resisted every temptation to fight a second battle on the Mondego; and, crossing the river on the thirtieth, he continued his retreat to Leiria, where he arrived on the second of October. During the whole march, the cavalry, under Sir Stapleton Cotton, covered the rear of the army, and were engaged in several affairs with the enemy's advance.

September.

October.

The army halted in Leiria till the morning of the fifth, when Lord Wellington, having ascertained that the enemy were coming on in force, gave orders that the retreat should be resumed. Massena had entered Coimbra on the first, where he hoped, by the rapidity of his marches, to have come up with the rear of the British army. Deceived in this, he immediately pushed forward to Condeixa. There the exhaustion of his troops, and the want of provisions, compelled him to halt till the third. With a degree of imprudence, utterly unaccountable, the large stores of Coimbra, instead of being reserved for

Oct. 5.

CHAP. X. 1810. October. the regular supply of the army, were suffered to become the subject of pillage to the soldiery. But the immediate wants of the troops having been thus satisfied, the pursuit was continued; and the wounded, whose transport had hitherto been a serious impediment to the army in its rapid advance, were left in hospital at Coimbra.

In the meanwhile, Lord Wellington and General Hill continued their retreat by leisurely marches; and on the ninth the former reached Sobral and Torres Vedras; the latter Alhandra on the Tagus. The proclamations which had been issued requiring the inhabitants to fall back on the approach of the enemy, and the fearful memory they entertained of the former barbarous atrocities perpetrated by the French troops, induced the whole population of the country traversed by the armies to fly from their dwellings, bearing with them all the property for which conveyance could be procured.

Oct. 9.

The British army, during its retreat, was accompanied by crowds of miserable and despairing creatures, driven forth as outcasts; and, though escaping with life, yet destitute of all means by which life could be supported. They quitted their homes—the scenes of all their

hopes, their memories, and their affections, in the conviction that they were never again to behold them. Mothers with infants at their breasts; children happy in their ignorance, and smiling amid the scene of desolation which surrounded them; palsied grandsires smiling too in the second infancy of dotage; men robust and vigorous, with features wrenched by strong agony of the spirit;—the blind, the maimed, the cripple, the diseased, all animated by the common and overpowering motive of escaping from the savage cruelties of the invaders, were seen crowding the roads, and flying for protection to the capital.

The multitude of sufferers increased as the army approached Lisbon. The wayside became strewed with articles of furniture which the wretched fugitives were unable to carry farther. Those who, in the weariness of exhausted nature, had cast themselves on the ground, started up with unnatural and convulsive energy to renew their journey, on learning that the enemy's columns were approaching.—But it is useless to enlarge on a spectacle of suffering of which the pen can give no adequate description. By no one who bore part in that memorable re-

CHAP. X. 1810. October. treat, can it ever be forgotten. Other scenes may fade in the changes of succeeding years, or perish utterly from the memory,—the impression of this can be effaced only by death.

Oct. 10. On the tenth the British army moved into its position in the lines prepared for its reception, and on the day following was joined by the Marques de la Romana, with about six thousand Spaniards from the Alentejo.

When Lord Wellington commenced his retreat from the frontier, it had been the impression of all ranks, that his intention was to embark, and finally relinquish a contest too unequal to be maintained with any prospect of success; but the measured, leisurely, and imposing manner in which the retreat was conducted; the knowledge that not an article of baggage had been sacrificed; that during the whole movement the infantry had never seen the enemy, but to defeat him on the heights of Busaco; and that, in the engagements of cavalry, the balance of success had uniformly been in favour of the allies,—contributed in some degree to restore confidence, and gave rise to a vague yet powerful hope that a retreat, in all respects so admirable, was not destined to termin-

ate in embarkation. It was not, however, till the army reached the lines of Torres Vedras, that the full tribute of admiration was paid to the skill and prescience of its leader. There the troops at once found themselves placed in a strongly fortified position, in which they might securely bid defiance to the utmost efforts of the enemy.

On the tenth, Massena advanced to Sobral, and drove out the force by which it was occupied. Then it was that he first became aware of the formidable position in which the allied army awaited his approach. He instantly halted; and as soon as it was dark a retrogressive movement was made, and three days elapsed before he again ventured to advance. From this circumstance it was easy to infer his dismay at the unexpected strength of Lord Wellington's position. For several days he was engaged in reconnoitring the ground; and though the chief features of its strength remained concealed, what he saw was, to an eye so experienced, enough to convince him of the extent and character of the obstacles opposed to his progress.

Oct. 10.

From the first, therefore, he appears to have given up all intention of attack, and placed two

CHAP. X. 1810. October.

corps of his army in bivouac, on a range of heights extending from Villa Franca on the Tagus, in an arc, almost concentric with that occupied by the allies. Part of Ney's corps was stationed at Otta and Villa Nova, and the remainder occupied the villages along the banks of the river. At this period, several partial affairs alone brought the armies into collision. On

Oct. 14.

the morning of the fourteenth, a sharp skirmish took place with the piquets near Zibreira, on the main road to Lisbon; and on the same day an attack was made on a redoubt at the foot of the mountain behind Sobral, which formed part of the British position. The garrison consisted of the seventy-first regiment, under the Honourable Lieutenant-Colonel Cadogan. The enemy advanced to the assault, and were bravely repulsed; but not satisfied with this success, the seventy-first advanced, in turn, and driving the French from a redoubt they had erected near that of the British, triumphantly maintained it.

This gallant exploit was performed in sight of both armies. Massena desisted from further efforts, and no event of any consequence occurred for several weeks. Of this period of inaction we shall take advantage, to offer a brief and

general description of the celebrated position occupied by the allies. CHAP. X. 1810.

Lisbon stands at the extremity of a peninsula, the neck of which is crossed by several rugged and mountainous chains, stretching from the Tagus in a semicircular direction towards the sea,—a distance of about thirty miles. Along these, considerably below the point where the river ceases to be fordable, two lines of defence had been selected,—one considerably in advance of the other,—both of the greatest natural strength. To add to their security the whole resources of military science had been lavished. Mountains were scarped perpendicularly; insignificant streams were dammed into inundations; forts of the most formidable description were erected on the heights; all roads by which the enemy could advance were broken up and obstructed, and at every part enfiladed with cannon; new ones were formed to facilitate the communications of the defensive army; the weaker points of the position were strengthened by the construction of works and retrenchments; batteries were planted on posts inaccessible; and every measure had been adopted by which the position could be rendered favourable for

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offensive operations, whenever such should be assumed.

The right of the first line rested on the village of Alhandra on the Tagus, and was flanked by a flotilla of gun-boats, which occasioned great annoyance to the enemy. The road leading to the town, which forms the principal approach to Lisbon, was completely broken up, and rendered impassable, by every obstruction which ingenuity could devise. This most important part of the position was occupied by the division of General Hill, with that of General Crawford on its left. General Spencer's division was in the centre; and General Picton's and General Cole's continued the line of defence from Torres Vedras to the sea.

Considerably in rear of the former, was a second line of defence, of features nearly similar, and possessing advantages of equal magnitude and importance. At different places a series of works had been erected, covering the communication between them; and thus, even had the first position been carried by the enemy, he would still have found his approach to the capital obstructed by a barrier of immense strength.

On the southern bank of the Tagus, the heights

commanding the city and anchorage of Lisbon, were fortified; and a corps, consisting chiefly of marines from the fleet, allotted to defend them. Strong retrenchments were likewise thrown up around Fort St. Julian at the entrance of the Tagus, in order to secure the embarkation of the army, should the enemy succeed in forcing the lines of Torres Vedras.

The whole extent of the position was strong in the most emphatic sense of that term. To call it impregnable would be idle, because no accessible position is so; but it certainly presented no avenue of approach, by which the enemy could elude encountering the full strength of the defensive army, or avoid being met by obstacles, which an immense numerical superiority could alone afford the prospect of combating with success.

Independently, however, of the circumstances to which we have alluded, another prominent advantage of the position yet remains to be noticed. To the westward of Sobral, a huge ridge called the Monte Junto takes its rise, and stretches in a long unbroken chain to the northward, for a distance of about fifteen miles. There were no roads by which this mountain could be

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traversed; and it unquestionably added greatly to the strength of the position occupied by the allies. In case of attack, the forces on the different sides of the Monte Junto could lend no support to each other, since, in order to communicate, it was necessary to make the *detour* of its northern extremity—a march of nearly two days. The communications of Lord Wellington, on the contrary, between every branch of his position, were secure and easy; and, in the course of a few hours, the great mass of his forces could be brought to the defence of any point the safety of which might be endangered.

Let us now cast a passing retrospect over the operations of the campaign. From the first, it was evidently the intention of Massena to break in, by the rapidity of his movements, on the defences of his opponent; to afford him no rest or breathing-time, but to force him at once to battle, or drive him headlong to his ships. So long as Regnier's corps remained in Estremadura, it was considered possible by Lord Wellington that Massena might push forward the main body of his army by Castello Branco and Abrantes. But, by that route, it would

have been necessary to force the strong position of Sarzedas, and the defences of the Zezere. Had he followed the road along the northern bank of the Mondego, he would have been met in the passes of the Estrella mountains, and at the Serra de Marcella. But the main object of Massena being to reach Lisbon, and by one decisive battle to terminate the campaign, he took the only route by which it was possible to advance, in rapid and uninterrupted march on the capital. True, he fought at Busaco; but his doing so, was a blunder of the first magnitude, and convinced of this error, he instantly resumed the prosecution of his project, by turning the left of the position, and continuing his advance. During his march he left no garrisons behind him; he occupied no posts even to secure his communication with Spain; but sacrificing every thing to the maintenance of his numerical superiority, in the anticipated battle, he pushed resolutely forward in pursuit of the allied army.

As he advanced, his difficulties increased. His communications with Spain were speedily cut off; the country through which he passed was deserted; the villages were tenantless; and

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for provisioning his army, he relied only on the supplies which Coimbra might afford.

The road by which Lord Wellington retired from Celorico to the Ponte de Marcella was greatly superior to that followed by the French. To prevent hurry and confusion in his movements, he had thrown his army across a difficult country, several stages in advance, and thus ensured the advantage of being able to intercept the enemy's advance. To afford still greater leisure for his movements, the bridges over the Dao and the Criz were destroyed by the light division; and the army, crossing the Mondego, halted in the position of Busaco. There his left flank was liable to be turned, and Lord Wellington knew it; but he knew also, should this manœuvre be adopted, that time would still be afforded for a leisurely retreat; and he wished to give confidence to his Portuguese troops, by braving the enemy's army, in a favourable position. Great moral advantages resulted from this victory. The retreat from Busaco to Torres Vedras was felt by all to be the march of a victorious army falling back on its resources. There was nothing fugitive in the

heart or spirit of the troops. The movement, though retrogressive, was attended by all the exhilaration of an advance. To the enemy it was an advance, but accompanied by all the depression of a previous defeat,—of increasing difficulties, and accumulating privations.

With Lord Wellington's arrival at Torres Vedras, the hour of triumph came. It was a triumph of which the greatest General, of whom history bears record, might have been proud. It was the triumph of consummate skill, prudence, and foresight, and the more glorious, because to the victors it was bloodless. In all the other victories which Wellington has given to our annals, the courage, steadiness, and discipline of British troops, claim—and rightly claim—a large share of the awarded honour. Here it was all his own. The wreath of Waterloo may be divided; but the brows of Wellington alone can be encircled by that of Torres Vedras.

Massena had scarcely gone into position when he received intelligence that Coimbra, containing all his wounded, had been captured by a corps of Portuguese militia under Colonel Trant. Trant had marched to Mealhada with the view of joining the corps under General Miller, but not

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meeting him, and hoping to take the enemy by surprise, he resolved to advance alone against Coimbra. Near Fornos, he fell in with a French detachment, which he succeeded in cutting off and overpowering. The cavalry were then sent forward to occupy the road to Lisbon, while the infantry advanced against the town. The resistance of the garrison was trifling; and the place surrendered at discretion, on a promise that the French soldiers should be protected from the violence and insults of the peasantry. The number of prisoners amounted nearly to five thousand. Three thousand five hundred musquets were taken and distributed to the Ordenenza of the country. The greater part of the prisoners were conveyed by Trant to Oporto, and the corps of General Miller and Colonel Wilson remained at Coimbra. These continued to scour the country; and, in a few days, nearly four hundred of the enemy—chiefly stragglers from the foraging parties—were made prisoners. To this number, each succeeding day brought new additions, and the difficulty of Massena in provisioning his army daily increased. The several Portuguese corps at Ourem, Peniche, Obidos, Abrantes, and on the

frontiers of Beira, formed a complete and connected cord on every side, and intercepted the whole of his communications.

In truth, the French army possessed nothing of the country but the ground on which it stood. Had the orders of the government for the destruction of all stores which could not be removed, been duly executed, it would have been impossible for the enemy to have remained above a week in his position. But in many cases, the grain, instead of being destroyed, had been concealed in pits, which were discovered either by the treachery of servants or the sagacity of French soldiers; and frequently the work of destruction had been delayed till the approach of the enemy rendered it impossible. It was from such sources that the supplies of the invading army were principally drawn.

Massena remained above a month in his position in front of Torres Vedras. The piquets of the armies were close to each other, but by tacit agreement no acts of hostility took place. About the beginning of November, the sick of his army increased so rapidly from exposure to the weather, and deficiency of provisions, that Massena detached the division of Delaborde to

CHAP. X. occupy Santarem, with the view of forming an hospital, as well as to assist the foraging parties in that quarter. He likewise threatened Abrantes, and occupied Villa Velha, with the intention of crossing the Tagus. In order to prevent this, General Fane, with a brigade of cavalry, was detached to the southward of the river, with directions to advance along the margin of the river, and destroy all boats, built or in process of building, within the reach of his guns.

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Nov. 14. At length, on the night of the fourteenth November, the French army broke up from its encampment, and retired to a line of cantonments extending from Santarem to Thomar. The line which had now been assumed by the enemy was strong. The left flank was secure, being bounded by the Tagus; and the cavalry was chiefly posted on the right, which was without natural support. An advanced corps was strongly entrenched on the heights of Santarem, behind the Rio Mayor; and a post was established at Punhete, in the rear, with a bridge across the Zezere. The head-quarters of Massena were established at Torres Novas.

On the retreat of the enemy Lord Wellington

immediately put his troops in motion to follow him. But as the intentions of Massena were uncertain, the division of General Picton, as a measure of precaution, remained in its position at Torres Vedras, and the remainder of the army was brought opposite to Santarem. A report from General Fane, that the baggage was retiring towards Thomar, at first induced Lord Wellington to believe that Massena was retreating to the frontier. Under this impression some movements of attack were made by the light division and the brigade of General Pack; but the enemy remaining firm, and displaying a considerable force, the columns were withdrawn, and no further demonstration was attempted.

The allied army then went into cantonments at Alcoentre, Rio Mayor, Azembuja, Alenquer, and Villa Franca, and head-quarters were established at Cartaxo. The corps of General Hill was thrown across the Tagus, and occupied the villages of Barcos, Chamusca, and Caregio. Should the enemy, in consequence of reinforcements, think proper to advance, Lord Wellington was thus prepared to fall back on the lines, and equally so to seize, by a prompt movement,

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on any advantage which circumstances might place within his grasp.

The state of Lisbon during the period marked by the events we have just narrated, merits record. When the army commenced its retrogressive movement from the frontier, the inhabitants of the capital were filled with apprehension and dismay. The richer classes thought only of securing their wealth; commerce was at a stand, and a gloomy foreboding of approaching misfortune, overcame that lightness and buoyancy of spirit, for which the inhabitants of more southern and genial climates are generally remarkable. The entrenchments which had been formed round Fort St. Julian gave rise to the belief that the object of the retreat was embarkation; but no sooner had Lord Wellington assumed his position at Torres Vedras, than confidence was immediately restored, and the business and the pleasures of life went on in their ordinary routine. The measures dictated by humanity for supplying the wants of the multitude which had been driven in on the capital from the surrounding country, were speedily adopted. Hospitals and public buildings were allotted for their accommodation, and a general

feeling of security pervaded the city, at a moment when the enemy were within a march of its walls. This was a singular state of things, and differing greatly from what Massena had expected. He calculated on the occurrence of tumult and insurrection, and that the people, goaded by famine, would welcome the approach of the French army, less as conquerors, than as liberators of the capital from a state of unendurable privation.

These hopes were belied by the event. In Lisbon provisions were dear, but there existed neither danger nor apprehension of famine. The provinces of Alentejo and Algarve, the great granaries of the kingdom, were free from the enemy, and yielded considerable supplies; ships from America and England were daily arriving, and maize was easily imported from the coast of Barbary.

During the remainder of the year, both armies remained quiet in their cantonments, and few occurrences of any importance took place. The country to the east of Santarem is fertile and abundant; and, being removed from the line of advance followed by the French army, the orders issued by the Regency had been

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generally evaded. The inhabitants, deeming themselves secure, took no measures for the destruction or removal of the stores, on which their own subsistence and that of their families depended, nor was it till enveloped by the French cavalry, that they were undeceived. The consequence was, that but a small proportion of the corn had been carried off, and the enemy for some time enjoyed abundant supplies.

Soon after his arrival in front of Torres Vedras, Massena had despatched General Foy to Paris, to explain his situation to the Emperor,* and urge the necessity of large reinforcements.

* Massena, in his report to the Emperor, transmitted by General Foy, represented the battle of Busaco as a false attack made to facilitate his object of turning the position, and converted only by the ardour of his troops into a serious engagement. The capture of Coimbra by the Portuguese, he stated to have been the result of a *mistake*, and that his intention was to have garrisoned the town, &c. "Ce rapport," says Colonel Guingret, in his Narrative of the Campaign, "montre que les "generaux memes deguisent parfois la verité aux Princes, "dont ils ont toute la confiance." As we presume this generalization of a particular delinquency is intended only to apply to his own countrymen, we have no inclination either to narrow its latitude, or dispute its justice. But what would be said in England, of an officer in command of an army, who should attempt to deceive his Sovereign, by the assertion of a deliberate falsehood!

As the arrival of these, however, could not be speedily expected, General Gardanne, commanding on the Agueda, was directed to forward a supply of ammunition for the immediate necessities of the army. That officer, with a corps of three thousand men, accordingly attempted to perform the required service, and advancing by Castello Branco, had nearly reached the French posts on the Zezere, when, alarmed by a report that Massena was retreating, he precipitately retraced his steps, abandoning the convoy, and harassed in his retreat by the Portuguese militia.

General Drouet, who had recently moved forward to the Coa, then determined, with a corps of ten thousand men, to open a communication with Massena. He advanced for that purpose, by the road on the left of the Mondego, and encountered little opposition on his march. Towards the end of December the junction was effected without difficulty, and the troops of General Drouet were placed in cantonments round Leiria to strengthen the right flank of the army.

Dec. 26.

In order to disperse the militia, a corps of eight thousand men, under General Claparede,

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was posted in the neighbourhood of Guarda. The irregulars, under General Silveira, imprudently suffered themselves to be drawn into an engagement which terminated in their defeat. They were pursued across the Douro with considerable loss, when Claparede, whose chief object was to keep open the communication between Almeida and Santarem, judged it prudent to retrace his steps. The consequences of this check, however, were only temporary. The militia, commanded by officers of skill and activity, were gradually acquiring confidence, and occasioned on all sides the greatest annoyance to the enemy.

END OF VOLUME II.

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NOTE.

In page 15 of the present Volume it is stated, that the officers of Sir John Moore's personal staff did not attempt to conceal their dissatisfaction at the resolution of retreat adopted by their leader. This assertion, though made on what certainly did appear satisfactory authority, we now find to be erroneous. By a communication with which we have been favoured by Colonel George Napier, we learn that the officers on the personal staff of Sir John Moore, so far from expressing dissatisfaction with any measure he thought proper to adopt, entertained on every occasion the most perfect reliance on the wisdom of his judgment. On the authority of this distinguished officer, therefore, we have great pleasure in correcting an error, unpleasant to the feelings of those immediately concerned, and which, by passing uncontradicted in contemporary narratives, must in some degree have contributed to corrupt the future sources of history.

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